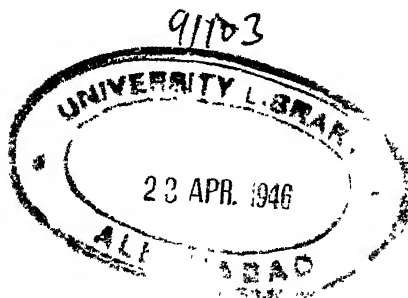


# The Best Short Stories of 1931

I: English



*Edited by*  
Edward J. O'Brien



London  
Jonathan Cape Ltd.

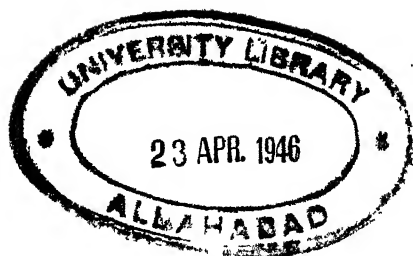
FIRST PUBLISHED MCMXXXII

JONATHAN CAPE LTD., 30 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON  
AND 91 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO  
JONATHAN CAPE & HARRISON SMITH INC.  
139 EAST 46TH STREET, NEW YORK

91103

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN IN THE CITY OF OXFORD  
AT THE ALDEN PRESS  
PAPER BY JOHN DICKINSON & CO., LTD.  
BOUND BY A. W. BAIN & CO., LTD.

To  
OLIVER GOSSMAN







## *By Way of Acknowledgment*

**I** MAKE grateful acknowledgment to the following authors, Editors and publishers for permission to reprint the stories included in this volume: H. E. Bates, Norman R. Collins, Kathleen Coyle, the Editor of *This Quarter*, Rhys Davies, Messrs. Joiner and Steele, Daphne du Maurier, Arnold Edmondson, A. E. Fisher, the Editor of *The Midland*, H. W. Freeman, Oliver Gossman, the Editors of *Story*, Malcolm Lowry, H. A. Manhood, Ethel Colburn Mayne, John Metcalfe, Messrs. Constable & Co., Ltd., E. R. Morrough, Florida Pier, Dorothy M. Richardson, the Editor of *The Window*, Messrs. Eric Partridge, Ltd., V. Sackville-West, Lady Eleanor Smith, L. A. G. Strong, the Editor of *The Bookman* (New York), W. A. Ward-Jackson, Oliver Warner, Sylvia Townsend Warner, the Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Malachi Whitaker, Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., and Orlo Williams.

I wish to make special acknowledgment for invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book for the press to Lily Anne Coppard.

If I have overlooked any name in these acknowledgments, it has been through inadvertence, and I trust that the omission will be overlooked.

I shall be grateful for suggestions from the readers of this volume, and shall particularly welcome the receipt of stories of merit which appear during the ensuing twelve-month in periodicals which do not come under my regular notice. Such communications may be addressed to me, *Care of Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 30 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.*

E. J. O.



## *Contents*

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE	II
ON THE ROAD. By H. E. Bates (From <i>The New Statesman and Nation</i> )	15
A STORY WITHOUT A PLOT. By Norman R. Collins (From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	22
THE LIMIT. By Kathleen Coyle (From <i>This Quarter</i> )	34
BLODWEN. By Rhys Davies (From <i>This Quarter</i> )	48
PANIC. By Daphne du Maurier (From <i>The Saturday Review</i> )	66
IN THE KNOW. By Arnold Edmondson (From <i>The Manchester Guardian</i> )	77
A NIGHT AT SLIGO'S. By A. E. Fisher (From <i>The Midland</i> )	82
RIGHT OF WAY. By H. W. Freeman (From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	94
PENNY WHISTLE. By Oliver Gossman (From <i>Story</i> )	103
SEDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM. By Malcolm Lowry (From <i>Experiment</i> )	110
LONELY CAMP. By H. A. Manhood (From <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> )	131
UGLINESS. By Ethel Colburn Mayne (From <i>The New Statesman</i> )	163
JUDAS. By John Metcalfe (From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	169
TREASURE IN THE DUNE. By E. R. Morrough (From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	188

	PAGE
LIARS. By Florida Pier	204
(From <i>This Quarter</i> )	
ORDEAL. By Dorothy M. Richardson	215
(From <i>The Window</i> )	
THE POET. By V. Sackville-West	223
(From <i>Life and Letters</i> )	
MRS. RAEBURN'S WAXWORK. By Lady Eleanor Smith	233
(From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	
DEATH OF THE GARDENER. By L. A. G. Strong	249
(From <i>John o' London's Weekly</i> and <i>The Bookman</i> - New York)	
A WEDDING PRESENT. By W. A. Ward-Jackson	263
(From <i>The London Mercury</i> )	
THE SILENCE RETURNS. By Oliver Warner	271
(From <i>The New Statesman</i> )	
THE SON. By Sylvia Townsend Warner	276
(From <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i> )	
POSTAL ORDER. By Malachi Whitaker	291
(From <i>The Adelphi</i> )	
AN IDYLL. By Orlo Williams	303
(From the <i>Criterion</i> )	
INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY. By Romer Wilson	326
(From <i>The Adelphi</i> )	
THE YEAR-BOOK OF THE BRITISH, IRISH AND COLONIAL SHORT STORY	
The Best British, Irish, and Colonial Short Stories: An Index	335
Articles on the Short Story in British and Irish Periodicals	349
Volumes of Short Stories Published in Great Britain and Ireland	383

## *Introductory Note*

FOR the benefit of readers unacquainted with the earlier volumes of this series, I repeat here a brief summary of the principles which have governed my choice of stories. I have set myself the task of disengaging the essential qualities in our contemporary fiction which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life. I am not at all interested in formulæ, and organized criticism at its best would be nothing more than dead criticism, as all dogmatic interpretation of life is always dead. What has interested me, to the exclusion of other things, is the fresh, living current which flows through the best British, Irish and Colonial work, and the psychological and imaginative reality which writers have conferred upon it.

No substance is of importance in fiction, unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. Inorganic fiction has been our curse in the past, and bids fair to remain so, unless we exercise much greater artistic discrimination than we display at present.

The present record covers the period from May 1, 1930, to April 30, 1931, inclusive. During this period I have sought to select from the stories published in British, Irish, American, and Colonial periodicals, those stories by British, Irish, and Colonial authors which have rendered life imaginatively in organic substance and artistic form. Substance is something achieved by the artist in every creation, rather than something already present, and accordingly a fact or a group of facts in a story only attains substantial embodiment when the artist's power of compelling imaginative persuasion transforms it into a living

truth. The first test of a short story, therefore, in any qualitative analysis is the measure of how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents. This test may be conveniently called the test of substance.

But a second test is necessary if the story is to take rank above other stories. The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most beautiful and satisfying form, by skilful selection and arrangement of his materials, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

I have recorded in this volume the names of a group of stories which possess, I believe, the distinction of uniting living substance and artistic form in a closely-woven pattern with such sincerity that they are worthy of being reprinted. If all these stories were republished they would not occupy more space than a few novels of average length. My selection of them does not imply that they are great stories. A year which produced one great story would be an exceptional one. It is simply to be taken as meaning that I have found the equivalent of a few volumes worthy of republication among all the stories published during the period under consideration. In compiling this book I have permitted no personal preference or prejudice consciously to influence my judgment.

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN.

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1931

*I: English*





## *On the Road*

BY H. E. BATES

(From *The New Statesman and Nation*)

THE wood was flooded with April sunlight, but shallow pools of rain lay wherever there were hollows in the black earth under the oak trees. Black rings of ashes were dotted about the ground where tramps had made their fires and rested, and primroses were blooming everywhere at the feet of young hazel trees. The wind that blew the hazels with a soft sound one against another was sweet and warm and laden with the scent of the primroses. It was like the breath of a new life.

A man came into the wood from the road and strode a hundred paces into it at random among the hazel trees. He was tall and black-haired and powerfully broad at the shoulders; he carried himself superbly, with a slight swagger of his hips, holding his head high up, and sometimes throwing it slightly backward, with unconscious motions of arrogance and pride. He looked less like a tramp than a fighter, but less like a fighter than some proud, sardonic Indian. His face was muscular and powerful, the skin was burnt tough and dry by the sun, and there was a glimpse of a tattoo mark of a purple and crimson flower on his naked chest. He was dressed in light-brown trousers, a black jacket slung over his shoulder, a soft grey hat and a blue shirt faded and washed to the colour of the sky. He stooped and nicked off a primrose with a finger-nail and put the flower in his mouth. He was looking for a place to rest.

He took another twenty paces into the wood and saw the

white smoke of a fire among the trees. He stopped and gazed at the smoke for one moment and then walked on. In another moment he came upon a woman and man sitting by the fire on a space of earth between a willow-bush and an oak tree. The man was asleep, with his head against the oak tree, and the woman was boiling a can of water on a heap of smoking wood. He saw a black bundle on the earth and an old perambulator pushed back against the willow.

He stood perfectly still and gazed at the woman without a flicker of his dark eyes. She was dressed in a short black skirt and an old stained orange-coloured jersey stretched as tight as skin over her big breasts and shoulders. Her hair was very thick and blonde, and there was something about her that recalled a lioness: the tawny eyes sleepy and rich with changing lights, the lips ripe and heavy, the large, strong face superb, with its passionate languor. She had a newspaper open on her knees, but she put it down on the earth as he looked at her. Her hands were strong and handsome, and the skin was a beautiful golden colour, smooth and with tiny blonde hairs that gleamed in the sunshine.

'Sit down,' she said. She waved her hand. There were no rings on her fingers. Her voice was low, and careless and husky.

He looked at the man lying with his head against the oak tree. She half-smiled.

'He's asleep,' she said. 'He's all right. You won't wake him.'

He sat down on the black earth. He sat so that he could see both the man and the woman at one glance. In an instant he saw astounding differences between them. The man was haggard and white, and the bones of his cheeks stood out clear and sharp as knuckles under his dark eyes.

His face was dirty and dissolute and strengthless, and he lay like a man who had received a stunning blow, his closed eyes dark as two deep bruises under his narrow brows. He looked as if he would never wake again, and the woman looked at him with one hasty glance of indifference, as if not caring whether he woke or not.

The water in the can began to bubble, and the woman slipped a stick under the handle and took the can from the fire. The man leaned across without hesitation and quickly shook something brown from a packet into the water.

'You're very smart,' she flashed, looking up. 'What was that?'

He leaned over and stirred the water with the stick, which he took from her own hands. 'Coffee.'

He spoke the word with the primrose in his mouth, and then leaned back and took the flower from his mouth and spat away an inch of bitten stalk and put it back again. There was something about the paleness of the primrose against his dark face that made him doubly arresting.

They stared at each other in silence, their eyes languid and bold and unflickering.

'Where are you making for?' he asked suddenly.

'Liverpool,' she said.

He looked at the perambulator. Then he glanced at her shoes. He noticed for the first time her blistered feet through the soles. He looked at her sharply.

'You're a hell of a way from Liverpool. A hell of a way,' he said.

She did not answer. The smell of the coffee was strong in the wood, and there was no sound except the whistling of a blackbird and the bees booming softly in the yellow dusty sallow blooms. She reached over to the bundle and brought out two blue enamel cups and poured out the coffee and handed a cup to him.

'No sugar,' she said in a languid voice.

He fumbled at his pocket and brought out a packet of yellow sugar, and set it on the earth between them and nodded towards the sleeping man.

'Going to wake him?' he said.

She shrugged her shoulders and tasted the coffee.

'What's wrong with him?' he said.

She crooked her elbow and smiled ironically and took a deep drink of her coffee.

'Like a fish,' she said.

He nodded and looked at the thin white face more closely. It seemed very young.

'Twenty-five,' she said. 'And he was a fine kid. But now . . .' She laid her two hands just above her breasts and shook her head.

The man took the primrose from his mouth and threw it on the earth and began to drink his coffee. The sunshine came warmly down on his face, and as he tilted back his head he felt the intent and sleepy gaze of the woman on his face too.

'Where are you going yourself?' she said.

He finished drinking and wiped his lips and stared at her, boldly admiring her.

'I want to get to Bristol and find a ship and get to Valparaiso,' he said. 'I'm sick of this country. I used to know a man in Valparaiso. I made some money there at one time.'

She nodded her head and took another drink of her coffee, and repeated thoughtfully:

'Valparaiso.'

He drained his coffee and spat the grounds from his mouth and leaned back on one elbow. The place where they were sitting was for a space of a foot or two without shadow, and the spring sunshine poured full on

the woman's head, so that her hair seemed more than ever golden and the strength and passion in her face finer in the yellow light. The old orange jersey had a row of buttons at the breast, but the first was missing and the second had slipped from its buttonhole. Her breast gleamed soft and fair against the dirty orange stuff, and half-unconsciously her hand moved and she did up the button afresh. But when her hand dropped back to her knees the swelling of her breast burst it apart again.

'What's it like in a place like Valparaiso?' she said suddenly.

'You know as well as I do.'

She nodded.

'If the good God just thinks fit it can be wonderful. In one month in Valparaiso I made five hundred pounds. And easy, too. I made it too easy. I wasn't satisfied. I thought I could go down to Buenos Aires and make a lot more. I lost every penny in a fortnight. Then I went up to Panama and on to Cuba and over to San Francisco. I made a bit of money sometimes, but I could never keep it long. Now I want to get back to Valparaiso. But if things go wrong I daresay I shall want to get back here again.'

His voice was deep and easy, and there was something nonchalant and ironical and dreamy about his words. The woman sat watching him with an expression of undisguised intensity, contemplating his dark face with a marvellous steadiness of her sleepy eyes, lost in thought; she seemed in that moment extraordinarily young, her face transformed by a moment of the strangest rapture. She looked at him candidly, enviously, and then suddenly with a glance of full-blooded passion too, her eyes wide and perfectly childlike, her bosom falling and heaving rapidly.

They sat for a moment and watched each other like two .

animals. His lips gradually assumed a little sardonic smile, but she never changed her expression of marvellous intensity. The sun was warming the primroses and the willow-bloom, and the air was filled with the soft scents of them, the smell of wood-smoke and the strong odour of earth.

The man beneath the tree stirred suddenly in his sleep and began to breathe heavily, like someone drunk, without waking.

The sound upset the woman. In a moment the fine expression on her face was lost. The sardonic, dreamy smile vanished from the lips of the man too. He stood up.

'I'll push on,' he said.

The woman rose to her feet also and stretched her arms over her head with a motion of weariness. In the moment that the orange jersey and the black skirt were pulled skin-tight over her rigid body he saw that she was pregnant.

She lowered her arms with a sigh, her magnificent body all languorous and heavy with its burden of strength and life. She yawned and then smiled at him when she had finished the yawn.

'You're not so very old?' he said.

'Twenty-nine.'

'And some,' he guessed ironically.

'No,' she shook her head. 'Twenty-nine.'

'I believe you,' he said.

He looked straight into her eyes and nodded, thinking for one moment of the sleepy man, the perambulator, her shoes and her pregnancy. She returned his look with some of the old intensity, but now as though she were thinking of something else, very far away.

'Well, I'll get,' he said. 'What'll you do if you get to Liverpool?'

She lifted her face a fraction towards the sun and shook

her head. Instantly he looked as if he regretted bitterly having spoken the words.

'So long. Good luck for Valparaiso,' she said.

'So long,' he said. 'Good luck.'

They looked at each other for a single instant and something warm and tender flashed between them before he turned away and began to stride through the wood towards the road.

The wands of the hazel trees kept whipping back as he passed, the pollen was shaken from the thick catkins and a golden dust came falling through the beams of sunlight slanting between the trees. The sound of the swaying branches and cracking twigs grew rapidly farther and farther away, and the hazel trees trembled less and less and finally became still again. The woman sat down and rested her face in her hands and stared in thought at the primroses and the sleeping man. The last of the branches swayed to rest in its place again and soon the wood was silent.

## *A Story without a Plot*

BY NORMAN R. COLLINS

(From *The London Mercury*)

YES, I suppose a really good story must have a plot (said my friend Thompson to me one evening while we were still round the table), but surely there's another kind of story that doesn't need a plot: the kind of story that goes after personality, after character, after what I call human nature.

There didn't seem to be much to disagree with in that remark, and I made the sort of noise that one does make when a friend obviously has something to talk about.

Just look at biography (he went on). There was a time when people read biographies just to get hold of the story. Chronology was what they were after. Fifteen shillings a week at twenty-one and a house in Park Lane at forty — you know the kind of thing I mean: 'Lives of great men all remind us' and that kind of tosh. But the modern biographer doesn't care a hang for chronology now. He's out after character, just like a portrait-painter. (Portrait-painting, by the way, is Thompson's trade.) Do you think I'm after action and incident and chronology when I'm painting a man? Do you think that I'm interested in the fact that he left his wife three months after he married her, or nearly got run over by a bus in Piccadilly last week? Of course I'm not, unless the fellow is really a wife-leaver, or the sort of sublime idiot that is just waiting to send up the Accident Statistics in the Annual Returns. Then I begin looking for clues in his face — folds under the eyes, little lines up the temple, creases in the corners



of the mouth, and so on. And I tell you that if I were writing, I should just try to paint a picture of a man — in words of course — and not tell a lot of things about him unless he was personally responsible for their happening. As I said before, it's not worth while letting a slate fall on your hero's head unless he's the sort of fellow that slates always do fall on.

Now the other Sunday I was in Tunbridge Wells, and I came across a woman that I'd like to have painted. Not on canvas necessarily, because it wasn't a particularly convincing face. I have tried to do a little sketch of her from memory, but frankly, she beats me. Anyhow, I can tell you that, as a student of human nature who's been on the look out for specimens for thirty years, I never saw such another.

You know Tunbridge Wells? It's the nearest spa to London. Pump Room and Chalybeate Spring and all the rest of it. Well, up to last Sunday I'd always liked the place. It's a well-to-do little town with plenty of shops and one or two concerts, though the inside of the Pump Room does smell a bit like dried nuts. But on a Sunday it's appalling. Everybody is at Church. There's every kind of tabernacle there — Church of England, Roman Catholic, all the Nonconformist sects, Quakers, Strict Elim, Baptist Chapel, Christian Science — everything. Wherever you go you hear the moan of organs and the unholy treble of choir-boys. There's a policeman on point-duty at the corner of the High Street ready to pinch anyone who's not carrying a hymn-book. I swear I thought he'd get hold of me and push me in somewhere just to keep up Tunbridge Wells's record of godliness!

Well, I walked about a bit trying to find some peace, looking for the ghetto, or the heathen quarter of the town, or something, and, of course, I did the correct

thing and strolled along the Pantiles. Now, I always like to have a coffee during the morning. But do you think I could find one anywhere? Of course I couldn't; everyone at Church. Just when they ought to have been ready to feed the hungry traveller, there they were all singing at the tops of their voices and neglecting their duties.

After a bit, I did find a sort of Good Pull-Up for Carmen, where it said 'Tea Straight from the Tea-Pot' — with the tea-pot drawn, all out of perspective, in place of the word — but I didn't fancy it, and went on a bit farther. Then just as I was going to give up the hunt, what should I come on but two little tea-rooms open, next door to each other. The first was called 'The Blue Bird,' and a pretty dainty little corner in this dirty world it was. The first thing I saw was the rippled head — permanently waved, I think you call it — of a girl in a blue dress, above the blue curtain that stretched across the window. Everything in that place was blue, and a cake with pink icing on it in the window definitely clashed with it. I was just about to go in there — though the coffee is always much worse than the tea, which is always China, in such places — when I suddenly had a notion that I might take a look at the shop next door. And I can't quite describe the sensation, but I tell you that, as soon as I saw it, I said to myself: Edwin Thompson, you're on the track of a little bit of human nature.

For a start, the blooming place was called 'The Black Café.' Of all the silly names to give a tea-room, where you want people to feel cheerful and lively, I reckon that's the silliest. And the window was just the same. There was a big cardboard sign, showing a girl holding a great sheaf of lilies, and underneath the words, 'Boomer's Toffees are as Pure as Lilies.' Well, the whole blasphemous contraption had fallen forward on to a strawberry

flan, and the thick syrup was dripping over everything underneath, like the raindrops in Davies's poem. Then there was a big Madeira cake with 9d. stuck on it, and a much smaller one marked 1s. 3d. Obviously, there was a pretty stupid and clumsy specimen in charge of the window. And I made it my business to add that specimen to my collection.

I pushed the door and found that it stuck about four inches open. Push as I might, it would go no farther. There it was, I groped about a bit for a chain or something of the sort — because you see, there was a very nicely lettered little notice in the window which said 'Open' — but there was nothing there. Then I saw that it was the door-mat that was keeping me out. I pushed down the stubborn corner with my walking-stick and, of course, the door opened easily at once. I remember looking down at that door-mat and noticing that the way the corner stuck up showed that it must be jammed pretty regularly: every time anybody came in, in fact.

A smell of paraffin, as though an oil-stove needed cleaning, came out at me, and inside everything was dusky and dingy — 'The Blue Bird' next door, was as bright as day — and it took me some time to accustom my eyes to the gloom. Then I saw that every blessed thing in that room was wrong. You know how, when you go into a dentist's waiting-room, you feel that it's a room but not a room, well, that's just how I felt there. The walls, as you may guess, were black. But they were a kind of shiny black that reflected everything. A box of crackers left over from Christmas shone out from the opposite wall almost like an illuminated sign. The floor was stained and polished and there were one or two rugs about: I couldn't help noticing that a really nice little bit of Persian stuff under my table was actually laid upside

down. Then the table itself was a dull bilious cerise that positively howled in conjunction with a green pot with artificial roses in it. And I ought to tell you, to give you a real picture of the place, that the cups and saucers were a bright salmon-pink — Woolworth's probably. Think of salmon-pink and green on cerise, against shiny black walls. The whole place absolutely twittered with the colour scheme.

I noticed, too, whilst I was waiting, that the top of the pepper-pot had been screwed on crooked and — infallible sign of the really rotten restaurant — there was a mustard-pot, but no spoon. Obviously, the place was understaffed. When there are plenty of waitresses they take that kind of thing away except at lunch-time and, besides, no one had come for my order.

Well, after I'd been sitting there for about ten minutes, I got a bit impatient and tapped on the cup with my spoon. The wretched thing was cracked, as I expected, and it only gave a sort of creak and not a ring at all. But, at last, a long red curtain (think of a red curtain in that room!) was pulled back and a woman in rather faded middle-age came out. Anyhow, she had pulled the curtain too far back, and the bamboo pole it was slung on came off the hook and knocked over a lot of jars of home-made jams and marmalades. Clumsy: that's what the whole thing was — just clumsy. I knew, at once, of course that this must be the woman who had arranged the window.

She was one of those frail wintry-looking women rather under middle height, about as anæmic as a sick schoolgirl, and with about as much body as a canary. About her face, I can only say that it was — expressionless. It was the sort of face that scares the commission portrait-painter: it would have defied the most malicious caricaturist. There was nothing at all in it to fix the mind on. The nose

was regular and not too long or too short: but it was neither a good nose nor a distinctive nose. The hair was beginning to get untidy: it was of that nondescript shade that was probably blonde in youth, and is never properly white in old age. Everything about that woman, from her pince-nez glasses down to her brogue-shoes, was what you might call 'normal;' everything, that is, but the whole. Her face, too, was so normal that I couldn't take my eyes off it. When she spoke it was in just that quiet, cultured, characterless voice that I expected.

'Did you want anything?' she said.

Now that's a question that annoys me. It's such a silly question! As though anyone in his senses ever went into a shop without wanting anything. It's absurd!

But I just said: 'Yes, you might please bring me a coffee and some cream.'

At that she went off, and I was rather annoyed to hear her fiddling about with that curtain that was still lying in a heap on the floor, and not getting my coffee. But I didn't say anything. It's very awkward in that kind of shop where you're served by the owner herself. She's usually about the same socially as yourself, and you never know whether to leave a tip or not. At any rate, I got sick of it at last and turned round to see what she was up to. And, believe me, there she was sitting down again.

'Are you getting that coffee?' I called out to her. She didn't say a word, just got up and went behind a screen and I could hear her poking about with one of those patent lighters. Then a great whiff of gas came out at me and I guessed she'd put a kettle on.

Well I waited and waited, and, at last, after about ten minutes, she came out again with a cup and saucer on a tray and put them down in front of me. No spoon: no

sugar: no cream. And believe me, or believe me not, it was teal

'Oh, I say, you know,' I said, 'I asked for coffee.'

And she actually said: 'Isn't it coffee?'

Now mind you, she didn't seem really surprised. She just apologized and went round behind the curtain again. I was nearly asphyxiated a second time whilst she was scraping away with that lighter of hers, and I could hear the gas hissing like a snake. Just as everything really was ready, what should happen but the telephone bell behind the counter started ringing. I could tell, of course — human nature being my speciality — that she was the kind of woman that goes into a panic when the 'phone-bell goes, and sure enough she was. Out she came in a rush, bringing down the curtain that she'd just got fixed up, and up to the counter she came with it all swathed round her legs. From where I was sitting I could see the whole thing plainly. The cord of the receiver was round a big Dundee cake and, of course, when she jerked up the ear-piece, she shot the cake off the counter, and sent it rolling across the shop like a great cart-wheel.

Then I heard her taking a long order for cakes, and repeating the words, 'Yes, four o'clock sharp, and honey in them, not jam, I know,' and she rang off.

Well, of course, my coffee had boiled over by then, and I had to be content with half a cup. And I can tell you it was bad coffee. Out of a bottle or something and half cold already.

'Where's that cream?' I said when she came by with a broom and a dustpan to sweep up the bits of Dundee cake which were everywhere. And without a word again, she went back into that little room of hers and I could hear her hunting round.

About a couple of minutes later she came out with some

little fancy pastries, nasty dyspeptic-looking little horrors, and put them in front of me.

'But where's the cream?' I said.

'It seems to have gone sour,' she replied.

Now that sort of thing makes me really cross! I hate ordering a thing and then not getting it. It knocks all the fun out of a meal. But I saw that it was useless to say anything. So I just sipped my coffee, and watched her trying to sweep the cake-crumbs into one of those new long-handled dustpans that kept on shutting up as she moved it, and thought about human nature.

At last I decided I'd better be moving on. Of course she'd gone by now, and I shuffled about a bit and tapped my glass and even got up and went over to the door without attracting any attention. I don't mind telling you I very nearly left sixpence — I'd only had coffee — on the counter, and went out.

Then right at the back of the shop I saw her. There she was, sitting reading. I had to call twice before she heard me, and when she came I saw that it was a book of poems she had in her hand. One of those flabby leather things with a lot of flabby sentiment in it. 'Rivers of verse flowing through wide meadows of margin,' or whatever it was that Sheridan called it. I'd guessed, of course, that she was the sort of woman who would read that kind of thing.

'How much is my bill?' I asked.

'I think it's threepence,' she said, with the air of someone just waking up.

Imagine it! She must have served coffee hundreds of times, and she didn't even know the price of it. Anyhow, I gave her sixpence and she couldn't find any change. She wasn't the sort of woman that you could possibly tip. She was wearing one of those long Paisley affairs

that look half worn out in a week but are ferociously expensive in the shops, and I guessed that she wasn't trying to make a living out of the tea-shop. At any rate, she had to run round to 'The Blue Bird' to get change, and I waited there filling my soul with that interior. She was back in a few minutes, and it took both of us all our strength to open that door, even though I was on the inside and could push the door-mat down.

'Oh dear, I *must* get that door seen to,' she said, when we had got it open.

And then you'd hardly believe it. She took the six-pennyworth of coppers she'd been out for, and just shot them into a little drawer, without another thought of my threepence. I didn't really mind, of course, but I think I'd have said something — pulled her leg about it, you know — if, just at that moment, she hadn't jumped as if she'd been shot. She rushed over to the telephone in a fearful state and began talking to the exchange. I thought, at first, that she'd gone mad suddenly — that sort of woman does, you know — but bless me if she didn't merely want to get the number of the last people who had 'phoned her. Of course, the operator couldn't, or wouldn't help her, and at last, all hot and dithery, she put the receiver up again, and said to me: 'There now, isn't that a nuisance? I don't know where those little honey cakes have got to go. I remember promising someone particularly that I'd send them. A lady came in yesterday to ask it as a favour, and now I've forgotten.'

What a woman! I reckon that she was just about the choicest little bit of human nature that I'd ever come across, and I couldn't tear myself away.

Just then, the book of poems that she'd stuck into a sort of hanging beadpouch at her waist, slid out on to the floor. The poems were James Whitcomb Riley's, I



could see. As I handed it back to her, I took a pot shot and asked if she liked poetry. Mark you, I've been a student of human nature for forty years, and that's the question to get women. It was just as though I'd touched a spring. It set her going like clockwork. She took a chair beside me, and in ten minutes I knew everything about her — family history, illnesses, religion, everything. She even tried to find me one or two sonnets she'd written herself, but she couldn't lay hands on them.

Her family history was one of the old-fashioned kind of stories — all plot and a bit of character, too. She'd married her husband when she was seventeen and he was forty-two. He was a partner in a firm of tea-merchants, and had risen from a tea-taster. According to her, he must have been one of the marvels of Mincing Lane. It was a pathetic story she told me. He took to drink — it's my belief that like so many really good, pure, virtuous women she drove him to it — and, of course, he had to take a lot of peppermint, and so on, to conceal it, and it ruined his palate.

'It was my late husband's pride,' she told me, 'right up to the finish to taste his own Duchess of Picardy blend. But, poor man, it was all over with him. One day he passed Green Indian as Best China, after a terribly bad night, and the other two partners bought him out. It broke his heart. He died in delirium a fortnight later.'

Now, of course, I had to say all the sort of thing one does say to a woman like that, but the funny thing was that she didn't seem to want sympathy. On the contrary, believe me, she was as pleased with herself, and her rotten little tea-shop, as any of the great merchant-princes in Oxford Street.

'Do you think I could just sit at home doing nothing?' she asked, without, of course, waiting for an answer, 'No,

of course, I couldn't. I've always believed that a woman's place is at home so long as she's got one, but when she's a widow she ought to go out into the world to keep herself from getting stale. A little ball of restless energy, that's what I am.'

Whilst she was talking, an old man who looked like an exhumed corpse had been shoving and pushing at the door trying to get in and had finally gone on to 'The Blue Bird.'

'That's why I opened this tea-room,' she went on, 'I must have an outlet. It's no good: I just can't do nothing. The shop's due to turn the corner any week now and, in the meantime, I say that good service is its own reward.'

She went on like that for a bit and then she noticed the time. She got up hurriedly and apologized. She'd just remembered, she said, that she'd promised to go out to lunch somewhere.

Well, it was time I was going, too, and, I don't know why, but I thought I'd wait for her. It was about ten minutes before she was ready, and when she came into the shop she piled her hand-bag and gloves and key on the counter and set the catch on the door. Then she had to go back for something, and, at last, she came out of the little room at the back in a great hurry and followed me out, pulling the door to with a snap.

But just as we'd turned into the Pantiles again she said: 'Oh' — just the way a woman does say 'Oh' when she's forgotten something — and back we turned. I declare she'd actually locked her bag and gloves and her key in the shop. We could see them still on the counter, staring at us through the window.

'What are you going to do about it?' I said.

'Well, it's no good doing anything now,' she replied.

'I'll send for the builder in the morning. He's got in for me before.'

With that, we said good-bye, and that's the last I've ever seen of her, hurrying off with her hands stuffed up her sleeves because she'd forgotten her gloves.

\*

Now (said Thompson, in the way he has when he wants to emphasize a point, and he comes of a stock that is always wanting to emphasize points), you see what I mean. If I were a story-writer, I should have told you the story of the early marriage to the tea-taster — the drinking bouts — the peppermint — the fatal blunder in Mincing Lane — widowhood and all the rest of it. But I'm not. I'm merely after human nature. What I've tried to give you is a sketch of an utterly futile woman; an absolute dud of a woman.

I assured him that it wasn't his fault if I couldn't absolutely see her, in the flesh as it were, and with that we went upstairs to the ladies.

## *The Limit*

BY KATHLEEN COYLE

(From *This Quarter*)

At the back of the Maloney's house in Rathfarnham there was a small walled garden, very sheltered so that flowers lasted late in it.

On an early December day Teresa Maloney was sitting there in a wicker chair furnished with faded cretonne. She was a smallish woman and, wrapped in the old motoring coat that she had put on against the cold, she looked smaller than she really was. It was a very shabby coat with a rubbed leather lining. From the upturned collar her broad pale face looked like a flower — like one of the pale winter chrysanthemums rising out of brown leaves in the bed of earth beside her. Her black, oily-looking hair ran away from a parting in broad waves, down over her ears. On the temples were two important splashes of white hair oddly resembling surf, as though the waves had truly broken there. Her eyebrows were thick and black and her eyes blue, blue and set wide. There was a little crooked bump on her nose and her left eye-tooth came down longer than the others and always showed between her ~~small~~ lips. There was something fantastic, an always secretly amused expression in her mouth and eyes. She was sewing, holding up the corner of a piece of coarse material like tea-towelling in her tense tiny hands. Curled up on her feet, which were raised on a footstool, was a black and white cat.

It was tranquil in the garden. The air was bright and cold, but not too cold. It was perhaps half-past twelve,

and far away, beyond the sensation of coldness and brightness, there was a sense of food being cooked. Her husband came out from the house and down the path towards her. She saw clearly in the pure light how his red hair was turning golden. She thought he looked far too thin for his height. He stooped to kiss her. When his lips came close to her mouth she dropped her head suddenly so that his kiss came on her forehead.

'My throat aches,' she said, holding her head away from him with an unexpected stiff gesture. She put her hand out, the hand with the thimble on and with her sewing finger she pushed a snail off the wall behind the chrysanthemums. She had an air of not knowing what she was doing when she pushed the snail, and her thimbled finger stayed on the wall where the snail had been.

'Throat! Better take care,' he burred.

'It doesn't ache much, exactly, but it's queer, it's . . .' She brought her hand down from the wall and looked at him with direct distraught eyes. 'It feels choky . . .' Quickly she gripped his hand and held it and her face went suddenly flushed under its pallor. She looked, in a minute, all gone to pieces. 'Oh! Jimmy!' Mad as lightning she whipped the handkerchief that was showing out of his coat pocket and held it against her lips. She held it there and it became red.

'My God, Teasel! He stood there, helpless, doing nothing, struck with horror, watching her effort to get rid of the blood. 'Bridget! Bridget!' he called at the top of his voice. He took the handkerchief and turned it and wiped his wife's mouth. 'Bring a glass of cold water, Bridget, quick, and run for Doctor Halloran, cold water! Teasel! what can it be?' He had an idea and showed it: 'An abscess maybe; it's been gathering, and now it's broken.'

She lay with her head back in the deep collar and her eyes closed. She continued to press the handkerchief against her mouth and wipe it.

The old woman came with the water. Teresa made a sign with her hand that she needed another handkerchief. Bridget went back to the house to get it. They waited without speaking, and almost motionless, for her return. Opening her eyes Tease saw the piece of stuff that she had been sewing. Neither it nor the cat had moved. She let the handkerchief drop on the ground and held the material against her mouth. The blood seemed to have ceased to come.

'Does it still pain you?'

She shook her head. Something impatient came into the motion of her hand.

'It was an abscess. . . .'

Bridget was there again. 'Shall I go for the doctor, ma'am?'

She shook her head feebly, and the impatience showed again.

'I told you to go. You must go.'

'No, Jimmy.'

'Yes, dear, it's better. He'll give you a gargle.'

Bridget ran up the path.

'Listen, Tease, if it has stopped now, I'd like to carry you in. It's cold here. You've caught cold.'

In an instant she opened her eyes and read him through. Her eyes went misty against him and she put her hand out on his arm to show that she was willing to be carried. He picked her up easily and one saw that he was strong and muscular under his thinness and that it was no effort. He carried her up the garden and into the warm kitchen where there was a smell of roasting meat. A bright red glow of heat shone from the kitchener.

'There! It's warm here, sit in Bridget's chair for a minute.' He put her down on the windsor chair. 'Do you want to get rid of your coat?' She nodded. He stooped and unbuttoned it and peeled it down off her like a shell. She became visible, neat and intact, like a tiny kernel. 'Has it stopped?'

She wiped her lips thoroughly and let the piece of stuff fall out of her hand. 'Yes.' Her voice was terribly low. 'I'd like some water.' He got it for her. She stood up with the glass of water in her hand and went over to the sink and spat into an empty bowl. 'It is finished, Jimmy . . . will you throw this out in the garden?' She gave him the bowl.

When he came back she was again sitting in the chair. 'It was queer, Jimmy, hardly a pain at all, a sensation. It is over now. I am glad that it is over.' She rubbed her face against his sleeve.

'You must take care, Tease. The doctor's sure to make you all right.' In the silence, vegetables boiled in a saucepan and the roast spat in the oven.

'I feel so odd about it. I do not want to have the doctor.'

'I know, darling, but it's better. It's better to be sure, to be careful. You've nothing to be frightened about.'

She looked truly frightened when he said that. She put her hand into his. It was very tight and tense, and felt like a knot in his until he closed over it. 'It's not the doctor, Jimmy . . . it's the blood. Do you know, it terrifies me! If it wasn't so . . . so red. It's so red on the white.' Suddenly she buried her face. 'Burn that stuff, Jimmy, burn it!'

'I won't burn it. It'll make a smell. See . . . I'll put it away, I'll take it out. You won't see it any more.'

He came back directly and put his arm around her. The cat was mewling at the door. Neither of them heeded it.

'Jimmy!'

'Yes.'

'I feel we ought to look at Bridget's roast. It may be burning to death.'

He went down on his hunkers to open the oven door. 'What must I do to it?'

'Baste it. Take a spoon and pour the gravy over it. Look! There's the spoon on the table that Bridget's been using.'

He was basting it when Bridget came in. 'The doctor won't be back till after lunch. They've promised to send him round before he takes the patients. He'll come immediately.'

Tease sat at the luncheon table eating nothing. Jimmy ate heartily with an air of making little of the present anxiety and of being full of spirits. He told her all about a new case he had, a will case with a very interesting psychology. When it came near the time for the doctor's visit she begged him not to wait. She wanted him to return to his office early. He refused her.

She became direct: 'I don't want you to be there. I want to be alone with him.'

'Righto! You shall be alone with him. I'll go down the garden and pick worms. But I must know what he says.'

He was there, fidgeting with the chrysanthemums, his thin fingers moving amidst the blooms that were not much bigger than Michaelmas daisies, when Doctor Halloran found him.

'Well, George?' They had known each other for years.

'She hasn't been well lately?'



'Well as anything until to-day. This was quite sudden. It happened like that!' He snapped his fingers.

'But she hasn't been herself?'

'Oh, I think so! Not so lively, perhaps.' She had, when he came to think about it, been sitting about rather much.

'Well, Jimmy, I have not told her, but . . . it's cancer, and I'm not quite sure if we can operate.' He plucked a flower and concentrated on it, avoiding Jimmy's eyes.

'My God, Tease!'

Everything was said in the silence.

'There is just a chance that we can operate. I must make sure. I'd like Galbraith to see her.'

'Yes. You haven't told her. . . ?'

'Of course not! She mustn't even guess. You must pretend that it's nothing. Be as cheerful as you can. Don't let her see.'

'My God! Good God! George . . . Tease!'

\*

During the next three nights Teresa did not sleep well. She tossed about terribly. On the morning of the fourth day she said to her husband that she would like to sleep alone. So that night Jimmy slept on a stretcher bed beside her. He slept soundly, and when he woke in the morning she was asleep and he dressed quietly without waking her. She woke when he was putting on his collar in front of the mirror, with his back to her. The sleep slipped out of her eyes as she became aware of him and the 'laughing secretly' expression seemed to leap in her face as she took in the absurdity of his tall lanky form with the braces crossed on his bulging shirt and his collar standing out in great flaps up to his ears. He pulled it forward and fastened it and then suddenly she screamed and the flaps leapt up again. He turned to her.

'Jimmy! Look, look! Oh, hide it quick, hide it!' She was showing him a large red stain on the turned back sheet: '. . . and on the pillow too! It must have been while I slept. Hide it! Hide it!'

\*

The hæmorrhage recurred during the morning. The doctor came and ordered her to stay in bed all day. Bridget changed the sheets and the pillow-slips. In the afternoon there was another hæmorrhage which came with such suddenness that the clean sheets were stained before she could prevent it. Bridget telephoned to Jimmy and he came home at once.

She was sitting up against the pillows when he entered, smiling at him as though she had really seen him coming down the road and had been waiting to greet him. He went over and sat down beside her on the bed with his arm around her.

It was tranquil in the room, with gleams of fire-light. The window was open a little top and bottom. Outside, a troop of sparrows were shouting with rasped throats for bread and circuses. Her voice seemed very low and harmonious in comparison. 'I'm glad you're there . . .'

'Don't mind it, Tease, don't mind it! You'll be all right presently.'

His great hand which seemed all metacarpal bones was entwined in her two small ones. 'If I didn't see it, Jimmy . . .' She looked up at him, the tiny white spot of her exposed eye-tooth was shining, and there was a fantastic mirth in her eyes. 'Couldn't you get me red-as-scarlet sheets and then, you see, I should be made whiter than snow?'

He took her quite seriously: 'Why, of course. I'll go down to Parry's at once and get him to make you some.'

'He'll take months. You know what Parry is. He'll

have the lambs shorn specially and specially dyed . . . dyed in the blood of the lamb . . . Oh, Jimmy, do laugh! You must laugh!

'Tease! Tease!' His arm tightened round her shoulders. They were quiet in the firelight together, waiting. Waiting.

'I've got a splendid idea. We can have scarlet tops made, half the depth of the sheet . . . I couldn't bleed enough to reach to the foot of the bed. . . .'

He got up with a jerk and strode to the door. 'Bridget! Bridget!' He came back in a second, quite calm, smiling at her.

'What do you want Bridget for?'

'I'd like a cup of tea.'

'At three o'clock?'

'Well, it isn't every day that I'm home at three. Can't I have a cup of tea in my own house . . . at three o'clock?'

'Why, of course! You may even have two cups of tea, three! Three at three o'clock!'

\*

They decided to operate. Jimmy had the sheets done at Parry's and brought them home himself with half a dozen silk pillow-slips. She was like an excited child for whom a party had been made, when she was decked out in them, wearing an old Chinese red dressing-gown that had been long ago discarded. She sat up straight and gay against the pillows, laughing at Jimmy: 'Oh! How very gruff your voice is, Grandmother, and what great hands you've got!'

\*

They operated. Jimmy saw her coming out of the ether. She was in agony, and she looked at him as if she knew everything and how it was all going to end and it was no good. The nurse saw how unbearable

it was to him and put him out of the room. 'She is not quite conscious. They are always like that. It is the ether. She will be better after she has slept.'

He saw her again asleep. She was strangely quiet to him, not moaning any longer. Her face was sharply cut out against the red pillows, deepened into them by the shadow of her hair, her deep black hair with the white splashes like the breast of a bird. She lay like a bird when it falls in the frost. . . .

She could not bear the nurse, so they had to send her away and have a daily one who came in whenever her throat needed dressing.

There were no more hæmorrhages, but she had begun to suffer a great deal. At first it was the after-pain of the operation, but as the weeks went on, the pain grew instead of lessening.

Jimmy lay every night in the stretcher beside her and gradually he began to hear her moaning. He slept at first because she moaned very quietly so as not to waken him. But the pain became stronger than her will and in the end she moaned without caring whether it was loud or not. She did not know. He would spend hours trying to soothe her.

George Halloran said that they would have to give her morphia.

'That means that she is going to die?'

'She will suffer less.'

She did not suffer less.

It was the limit one night when she said — he was sitting on her bed with half of her in his arms — 'I'd rather the bleeding came back.'

He told George.

'It will come back.'

'Then the pain will go?'

'You never can tell.'

Seven weeks after the operation she had a crisis. It was terrible to witness. Dawn found Jimmy torn and unnerved, a rag of a man keeping vigil. The morphia had failed. The truth was that she had enough to kill her. And then, quite suddenly, she slept. It seemed incredible to Jimmy. He leaned over and touched her cheek with his finger and when he took his finger away it was red. He drew himself back stiffly, afraid of making a blunder, even with his breath, that might wake her. He tiptoed out of the room.

\*

Bridget caught him on the bottom stair. 'You must have a cup of tea, sir.'

He shook his head. His eyes were wild, and he kept wiping his mouth. 'She's asleep. For God's sake don't wake her! Don't make a sound, I warn you. You'd better shut up the cat. Is the cat shut up?'

'Yes. Yes. The cat's safe.'

He went to the front door and opened it noiselessly.

Bridget crept after him: 'You're not surely going out?'

He waved her away, into oblivion, with his hand.

'But you can't, it's raining, it's raining like mad.'

He paid no attention. He went out of the door, on to the step sideways, like an escaping thief.

'Here . . .' she ran after him in her slippers and thrust an umbrella into his hand. 'You'll be drenched to the bone. Take this.' She waited until he took it and then turned in out of the rain. She had a glimpse of him, fumbling over the gate latch, the umbrella still unopened, before she shut the door.

\*

He turned down the road and went past George

Halloran's darkened windows, past the house where the crazy countess lived, and crossed over by the district grocer's. Round the corner from the grocer's a couple of boys were unpacking a crate of eggs. They stopped when they saw him:

'Oh holy suffering Wilduck, look at the zany!'

'Hold it up higher, mister!'

'Tie your handkerchief on it!'

'Hit me with it!'

He stopped before them, arrested. A mixture of pain and consciousness filled into his expression. His wild eyes came to rest in this misery, and then he strode on.

'Oh, Cheeses! The sun'll blind you, mister! Pull it down across your eyes. Oh, Cheeses!'

He went on from them, steadily, heedless. He met an old woman in a cape that was put on over her bonnet and came down to her ankles. She stopped right in front of him, and from somewhere in her bosom she moved fat agitated red fingers. 'My poor man, is it crazy you are, or is it drink?'

'No! No! It's my wife, ma'am . . . she is dying of cancer.' He moved round her and she moved with him.

'But all the same now,' she reasoned, 'you could open that umbrella and not hold it up so ridiculously. Man dear, you'd think it was a flagstaff you were carrying. Open it, you'll be soaked to the skin.'

'That is a thing that I do not intend to do. I am going to hold it up like this . . .' he held it higher, 'to be jeered and mocked at and spat upon, as an act of sacrifice to God to beseech Him to have pity on my wife . . . she is in torment. . . .'

'Holy Mary! Holy Mother of God!' She stood looking after him with fingers moving like coarse red flowers in her bosom.

The traffic thickened as he approached Portobello Bridge. People stared and some of them stopped but he got away from them into the scurrying line going across the bridge. The Liffey ran fast with the wind, thickened and muddy and full of drift. On one of the quays men were busy unloading a string of barges packed with turf that had come down from the mountains. The turf resembled great dark brown woolly caterpillars at the edge of the turbulent yellow water. Over the bridge the pavement was diminished by the market stalls, which had begun to put out their provisions and were already thronged with early morning customers. Jimmy got jammed in the crowd. He escaped notice amidst the welter of other, opened, umbrellas. A motor lorry came rattling down the street with such speed and force that, when it reached the narrow part, the people against the provision stores and the open booths were welded into one mass. Jimmy was pushed up close against the stomach of a fat woman. 'Go easy!' she yelled at him.

He could not go easy for he was powerless to move backwards or forwards. And then, suddenly, from somewhere between Jimmy and the fat woman and their tight neighbours, a cauliflower emerged.

'Is it stealing my cauliflower you are?'

'Cauliflower!' Jimmy repeated.

'Oh! He's going to hit me!'

'Put down the umbrella!'

'I cannot put it down. I am doing this for my wife who is. . . .'

'Put down the umbrella.'

The lorry was past, and the mass of marketers loosened. The bodies of the women rippled away from Jimmy as though he had been a stone flung in the midst of them.

'He's mad!'

'I'm not mad. . . .'

'He took the cauliflower out of my bag.'

A newspaper-boy had stopped on his bicycle at the kerb and a big burly policeman was bearing down upon them.

'Here, you get along out of this, Mister!'

Jimmy stepped out into space. He raised the umbrella as high as it would go, and standing out in the cleared circle he declared:

'I am doing this for my wife. . . .'

'Here! You get out of this, Mister. Get along home!'

'This is good enough for a stop-press!'

'Pardon me,' said a white-haired old man with a gentle air, 'allow me!' He put a hand on Jimmy's shoulder as one might touch a child who had strayed. 'Where do you want to go to? I'll take you there. I shall be very glad to accompany you.'

Jimmy stared at him, wild and bewildered. 'Yes, you are quite right. I must go home. I must go home to my wife who is dying of cancer. She is dying of cancer, I tell you. Dying. You cannot conceive the extent of her suffering. . . .'

The gentle old man directed him firmly towards a small grey Ford and practically pushed him into it. 'Where do you live?'

Jimmy gave him the address; then he stood up in the car and waved an umbrella at the crowd that had gathered and gathered and become a blur of umbrellas, spreading like gigantic wet leaves over curious queerly-lit faces: 'I am doing this for my wife who is dying of . . .'. The car moved off, Jimmy's last word was a shriek: 'CANCER!'

'Yes,' said Bridget, 'she's still asleep.'



'There's, I think, a taxi . . .' he made a vague gesture, 'will you pay the man?'

Tease was lying as he had left her. Daylight shone in two parallel lines across the room escaping from between the narrow blind and the window frame.

He went down on his knees: 'I thank you, God! I thank you, God!'

She was lying so very still, fixed like wax into the scarlet, whiter than snow against the scarlet and her sleep was deep. . . .



## *Blodwen*

BY RHYS DAVIES

(From *This Quarter*)

'PUGH JIBBONS is at the back door,' cried Blodwen's mother from upstairs. 'Go and get four pounds of peas.'

A sulky look came to Blodwen's face for a moment. She hated going out to Pugh Jibbons to buy vegetables; she couldn't bear his insolent looks. Nevertheless, after glancing in the kitchen mirror, she walked down the little back garden and opened the door that led into the waste land behind the row of houses.

A small cart, with a donkey in the shafts, stood there piled high with vegetables. Pugh Jibbons — the son of old Pugh Jibbons, so called because he always declared that Jibbons (that being the local name for spring-onions) cured every common ailment in man — leaned against the cart waiting for her. This was almost a daily occurrence.

He did not greet her. He looked at her steadily, as she stood under the lintel of the door, a slight flush in her cheeks, and ordered, in a harsh voice of contempt: 'Four pounds of peas!'

Pugh Jibbons grinned. He was a funny-looking fellow. A funny fellow. Perhaps there was a gipsy strain in him. He was of the Welsh who have not submitted to industrialism, Nonconformity and imitation of the English. He looked as though he had issued from a

\* From *A Pig in a Poke* by Rhys Davies. By arrangement with Messrs. Joiner & Steele.

cave in the mountains. He was swarthy and thick-set, with rounded powerful limbs and strong dark tufts of hair everywhere. Winter and summer he bathed in the river, and lived in a tiny house away up on the mountain-side, near to the lower slope where his allotment of vegetables was. His father, with whom he lived, was now old and vague and useless; the jibbons had not kept him his senses; and his mother was dead. They had always lived a semi-wild life on the mountain-side, earning a bit of money selling their vegetables, which were good and healthy, in the valley below.

'Coming to an end they are now,' he said, weighing the peas, but keeping his eye on her, which he winked whenever her disdainful glance came round to him. But she would look into the distance beyond him.

There was usually a box of flowers on the cart. To-day there were bunches of pinks in it. He took one out. She held out her apron for the peas and he shovelled them into it, placing the bunch of pinks on the top. Nearly always he would thrust a bunch of flowers on her. Usually she took them. But to-day she didn't want to. She wanted to tell him something. She said:

'Take those flowers back.' Her colour came up, she arched her beautiful thick neck, her eyes blazed out on him. 'And if you keep on following me about the streets at night I'll set the police on you, I warn you. Where's your decency, man?' And then she wanted to slam the door in his face and hurry away. But she waited, looking at him menacingly.

His mouth remained open for a moment or two after her outburst, comically, his eyes looking at her with startled examination. Then he pushed his cap to the back of his head, thrust out his face aggressively and demanded:

'Is that bloke that goes about with you your fellow, then?'

Her disdainful face lifted, she rapped out, 'Something unpleasant to say to you that fellow will have, if you don't watch out, you rude lout.'

Then he became mocking and teasing again, his eyes sharp with wickedness. 'He's not a bloke for you, well you know that,' he said daringly. 'Toff as he is, and tall and elegant, he's not a bloke for you. I know him, and I know the family out of what he comes. There's no guts to any of his lot. Haw-haw and behave politely and freeze yourself all up. There's no juice and no seed and no marrow and no bones to him. Oswald Vaughan! Haw-haw.' And screwing up his face to a caricature of a toff's expression, he stood before her undismayed and mocking, his short thick legs apart and almost bandy.

'You . . .' she muttered, raging, ' . . . You wait. You'll be sorry for this.' She slammed the door and hurried to the kitchen.

The unspeakable ruffian! What right had he to talk of Oswald like that. And 'He's not a bloke for you, well you know that!' Impudence. Pugh Jibbons, some one they bought vegetables from! Why, however had it happened? To have a ruffian of a stranger talk of her affairs like that.

She threw the peas out of her apron on the table. The bunch of pinks was among them. She trembled with anger. She had intended throwing them back at him. She ought never to have accepted flowers from him before. He was always shoving a bunch of flowers in her hands or sticking them among the vegetables. Never again. She'd throw his flowers back at him. These pinks she had a good mind to put in the fire.

But they smelled so sweet and they were so delicate,

she couldn't throw them away. She lifted her arm for a vase. Her shape was splendid. She was a fine handsome young woman of twenty-five, all her body wholesome and well-jointed, with fine movements, unconsciously proud and vehement. Her face, when she was silent and alone, was often sullen. But always it had a glow. She was a virgin. Her sister was married, her father was check-weighman in the colliery, her mother was always urging her to wed.

Oswald Vaughan, the son of the local solicitor, had been courting her for some months now. He was in his father's office and his family was one of the most respected in the place, big Chapel people. He was the smartest man in the valley, with his London clothes and little knick-knacks. Both father and son read big books with owl-like gravity, and indeed they were very clever, in their minds. Very brainy.

Oswald courted Blodwen with great devotion. He came to her as though to a meal. He himself said he was hungry for women. He would sit with her in the parlour of her home and hold her hands tightly or hug her shoulders with a lingering pressure. He respected her and, believing her to be intelligent, he brought books of verse and read her Wordsworth and Tennyson, especially the latter's *In Memoriam*, of which he had a profound admiration. When he left her he was refreshed and walked home in an ecstasy. Blodwen would go to the kitchen for supper and, oddly enough, something would be sure to irritate her always, either something wrong with the food or she took offence at some observation of her mother or father. She was a difficult girl really.

Her anger against Pugh Jibbons persisted as she went about the duties of the day. If there had been a stick near, as he had mocked at her that morning, she would

have laid it about him. It was the only way to treat a man of his kind. She was quite capable of giving him a good sound beating with a strong stick. The low-down ruffian! And her anger had not abated even by the time Oswald called that evening. She went into the parlour, her eyes glittering with bad temper.

Oswald sat opposite her and laid his clean yellow gloves on his knee. His face was pale and narrow, with a frugal nose and pale steady eyes. 'You're looking very wicked and naughty this evening, my dear. That's no way to receive your young man.'

Her eyes gleamed, but she stared away from him through the window. He went on:

'You know, I always think a woman should never be anything but bright and happy when her men-folk are about. That's her duty in life. . . .'

'Let's go out,' Blodwen interjected. 'I feel I must have some fresh air this evening.'

He sighed. But he was submissive, much as he wanted to stay in the parlour and caress her. He began to draw on his gloves.

'We'll go to the pictures if you like,' he said. He was very fond of going to the cinema with her. Nothing he liked better than sitting in the warm, florid atmosphere of the cinema, pressing Blodwen's hand and watching a love film.

'I'd rather go for a walk,' she answered, turning her sparkling eyes on him fully.

'There's so few walks about here,' he sighed.

'There's the mountains,' she said.

She liked going up the mountains. He didn't. Not many people went up the mountains: they had been there all their lives and seemed not of much account, and dull to walk on. Great bare flanks of hills.

'All right,' he said, getting up and looking in the mirror over the mantel to put his tie straight. Blodwen went out to put on her hat and fur.

As they went down the street, the neighbours looked at them appraisingly. Everybody said what a picture they looked, the picture of a happy couple. He with his tall slim elegance and she with her healthy wholesome-looking body, her well-coloured face, they seemed so suitably matched to wed. His fine superiority and breeding wed to her wild fecund strength. They looked such a picture walking down the street, it did the heart good to see it.

They crossed the brook that ran, black with coal-dust, beneath some grubby unkempt alders and climbed a straggling path at the rocky base of the hills. Presently Oswald remarked:

'You're very quiet this evening.'

Then there came to her eyes a little malicious glow. He had taken her arm and was gazing down at her fondly — even though, as the path became steeper, he began to breathe heavily, almost in a snort. She said:

'I've been upset to-day.'

'What was it, my dear?' he asked soothingly.

'You know that man called Pugh Gibbons, the son of old Gibbons, who sells vegetables in a donkey-cart?'

'Yes, of course. Everybody knows him. They're a fine rough lot, that family. Half-wild.'

'Well, he molests me.'

'Molests you!' Oswald exclaimed. 'Attacked you, you mean?' His mouth remained open in astonishment and horror.

'Oh, no. Not attacked me. But he bothers me and follows me about. And this morning I was buying vegetables from him at our back door and he said — Oh, he said some rude things.'

'Does he follow you about in the streets, make himself a nuisance to you?' Oswald demanded sternly, the young solicitor.

'Yes, he does,' she said angrily.

'Then,' said Oswald, 'we'll send him a warning letter. I can't have you being bothered like this. The rascalion. I'll put a stop to him. I'll have a letter sent him to-morrow.'

'Will you?' she said.

'Of course. That's where I come in useful for you. A solicitor's letter will frighten him, you'll see.'

'Perhaps,' she said after a moment or two, 'you'd better leave it for a time. Nothing serious is there to complain of. And I told him myself this morning, I warned him. So we'll wait perhaps.'

She persuaded him, after some debate, that it would be better to postpone the sending of the letter.

Not until they got to the mountain top, did she seem to regain her good spirits. She loved the swift open spaces of the mountain tops. They sat beneath a huge grey stone that crouched like an elephant in a dip of the uplands, which billowed out beneath them in long lithe declivities. They could see all the far-flung valley between the massive different hills. Some of those hills were tall and suave and immaculate, having escaped the desecration of the coal-mines; others were rounded and squat like the wind-blown skirt of a gigantic woman, some were shapeless with great excrescences of the mines, heaps of waste matter piled up black and forbidding; others were small and young and helpless, crouching between their bulked brothers. Blodwen felt eased, gazing at the massed hills stretched along the fourteen miles of the valley. She felt eased and almost at peace again. Oswald glanced at her and saw she wanted to be



quiet, though the storm had left her brow. He sat back against the rock and musingly fingered his heavy gold watch chain. He did not care for the mountain tops himself. It was dull up there: and he seemed to be lost in the ample space.

He couldn't bear the silence for very long. He had to say something. He couldn't bear her looking away, so entranced in some world of her own.

'A penny for them,' he said, touching her shoulder lightly.

She gave a sudden start and turned wondering eyes to him. And her eyes were strange to him, as though she did not know him. They were blue and deep as the sea, and old and heavy, as though with the memory of lost countries. She did not speak, only looked at him in startled wonder. One would have thought a stranger had touched her and spoken.

'It's fine up here,' she said.

But she was so different and not the human Blodwen that he knew in the parlour or the cinema. He couldn't warm himself with her at all. Her body seemed rigid and unyielding in his caress. She was hard and barren and profitless as these mountain-tops.

He considered the evening wasted and a failure, as they descended the mountain in the grey-blue light. And he was hungry to hold her, to feel the strong living substance of her body. His face became almost pathetic in its desire. But somehow he could not penetrate the subtle atmosphere of aloofness that she wrapped herself in. He kept on sighing, in the hope that she would notice it. Women were very funny and, beyond a man's understanding.

She did not ask him into the house, but lifted her lips to him, her eyes shut, inside the gateway of the garden.

In a sudden spurt of anger he pecked quickly at her mouth and withdrew. She opened her eyes and they seemed unfathomable as the night sky. They both waited in silence for a few moments and then, lowering her head, she said calmly:

‘Good-night, Oswald.’

‘Good-night, Blodwen.’

He lifted his bowler hat and turned resolutely away.

She went in, slowly and meditatively. Her face was calm and thoughtful. She still had the clear exalted peace of the high spaces of the hill-tops. But she was aware of Oswald and his dissatisfaction. She couldn’t help it. There were times now and again when his limp and clumsy love-making affronted her, as there were times when it amused her and when it roused her to gentle tenderness. After all, he was young: only twenty-five. Married, she would soon change him and mould him, surely she would? She wondered. Married, things would be different. She’d have to settle down. Surely Oswald was the ideal husband to settle down with. She would have a well-ordered life with no worries of money or work. Oswald would have his father’s practice and become a moderately wealthy man: and his family had position. Had always been of the best class in the place. Different from her family, for her grandfather had been an ordinary collier and even now they were neither working nor upper-class. Her mother was so proud of what the step-up marriage to Oswald would mean: she had already bought several things on the strength of it — a new parlour set of furniture, a fur coat and odd things like a coffee-set and silver napkin-rings and encyclopædias and leather books of poetry. It would be a lovely showy wedding too.

But she wished she didn’t have that curious empty

feeling in her when she thought of it all, sometimes. Not always. Sometimes she realized Oswald's virtues and deeply respected him for them: good-manners, breeding, smartness, a knowledge of international affairs and languages, a liking for verse. Yet she knew and feared that void—that emptiness in her when she thought of all that marriage with him implied.

The next morning she remembered Pugh Jibbons and how angry she had been with him yesterday. What he wanted now was a good rude snub and she'd give it him that morning. And thinking of him, her blood began to run faster again. She'd never heard of such impudence. Anybody would think she had encouraged him at some time or other. That riff-raff!

When she heard his shout in the back-lane she asked her mother what vegetables they wanted and sauntered up the garden to the door.

'Morning,' said Pugh, looking at her with just a suspicion of mockery in his face. 'And how's the world using you to-day then?'

Statuesque, with that insulting ignoring of a person that a woman can assume, she did not hear his greeting and ordered peremptorily:

'Three pounds of beans and six of potatoes.'

'Proud we are this morning,' he observed.

He stood before her and looked at her directly, unmoving. She began to flush and arch her neck, she looked beyond him, to the right, to the left, and then her glance came back to him. His smile was subtle and profound, the light in his gleaming dark eyes was ancient and shrewd. She wanted to turn and hurry away, slam the door on him. But she didn't. His swarthy face, with its dark gipsy strain, was full of a knowledge that she sensed rather than saw. His head rested deliberately

and aggressively on his powerful neck. Suddenly she ejaculated furiously:

'Don't stare at me like that! D'you hear! Where's your manners? What right have you to stand there staring at me!'

'You know what right I have,' he answered.

'I know, do I! I warn you, Pugh Jibbons, not to molest me.'

'Suppose,' he answered, a thin wiry grin coming to his face, 'that Oswald Vaughan would have something to say and do about it!'

Her anger flowed up again. 'What right have you,' she demanded again, 'to interfere with me? Never have I encouraged you. Haven't you any decency, man? You're nothing to me.' And then she was angry with herself for submitting to his advances to the point of discussion, instead of maintaining a haughty aloofness. She couldn't understand why she had given way to him so easily.

He looked at her. All his body and face seemed tense, gathered up to impose themselves on her consciousness.

'I figure it out,' he said, 'that I've got a right to *try* and have you. Because I want you. You're a woman for me. And I think I'm a man for you. That's what I think. I could do for you what you want and I want. That's what I feel.'

She stared at him. Her face had become proud and high now: she had got control of herself. But she couldn't snub him in the harsh final way she had intended. She said, haughtily:

'I don't want to hear any more about this. Give me the beans and potatoes, please.'

Pugh Jibbons came a step nearer to her. 'You come to me one evening,' he said. And his eyes were gleaming

out on her in a command. 'You come to me one evening and a talk we'll have over this. I promise to respect you. I've got more to tell you about yourself than you think.'

She drew back. 'Ha,' she exclaimed with fine derision, 'what a hope you've got! Are you going to give me the beans and potatoes or not?'

He looked her over and then immediately became the vegetable man. He weighed out the beans and potatoes. Aloofly she watched him, her face stern. To-day there were bunches of wide flat marguerites in the flower-box at the front of the cart. He took out a bunch.

'I don't want the flowers, thank you,' she said coldly.

'Nay,' he said, 'you must take them. You're one of my best regular customers.'

'I don't want the flowers,' she repeated, looking at him stonily.

He tossed the bunch back into the box.

'Silly wench,' he said.

'Don't you call me names!' she turtled up again. 'You deserve them,' he said. Then he looked her over with desiring appreciation. 'But a handsome beauty you are, by God, a handsome beauty. Different from the chits of to-day. You're one of the women out of the old world, that's what you are. Pah, but your mind is stupid, because you won't be what you want to be, only like the chits.'

She quivered: and her anger had become strange in her blood, rather like fear. She could find nothing to say to him, she turned, slammed the door and hurried with the vegetables to the kitchen.

Her mother looked at her with ill-temper. The mother was a tall vigorous woman. But her face had gone tart and charmless with the disillusion frequent in working women whose lives have been nothing but a process of

mechanical toil and efforts to go one better than their neighbours. She too in her day had had her violences. But her strength had gone to sinew and hard muscle. Even now she cracked brazil nuts with her teeth, heaved a hundredweight of coal from cellar to kitchen, and could tramp twenty miles over the hills on bank-holidays. Now she distrusted the world and wanted security for herself and her daughters.

'What's the matter with you, girl!' she demanded irritably, as Blodwen sat silent over the midday meal. 'Shift that sulky look off your face.'

Blodwen did not answer. But her mouth sneered unpleasantly.

'You look at me like that, you shifty slut,' the mother exclaimed angrily, 'you'll leave this table.'

The daughter got up and swept out of the room. Her head was turtled up, fearless as an enraged turkey.

'Ach,' shouted the mother after her, 'don't you dare show that ugly face to me again, or grown-up or not you'll feel the weight of my hand. Out with you.'

But Blodwen had dignity, sweeping out of the room, and her silence was powerful with contempt and hate.

'Bringing a girl up,' muttered the mother to herself, 'to snarl and insult one, as though she's what-not or the Queen of England. Ach, that she was ten years younger. I'd give her what-for on that b.t.m. of hers. The stuck-up insulting girl that she is.'

Blodwen stayed in her bedroom for the rest of the day, knitting. At six-thirty Oswald called. Blodwen came down to the parlour, still a little sulky. But her eyes had gone mysterious and sad again. There was anxiety on Oswald's face as he greeted her. She had frightened him last night. And now he couldn't live without her: she was the sole reality in his life.

'My dear,' he murmured, pressing her hand, 'my own dear.'

She actually smiled up at him, wanly.

'Are you better?' he asked gently.

She sat beside him on the sofa. And presently she asked:

'Oswald, when shall we get married?'

He started excitedly. Before, he had never been able to make her decide anything definite about their marriage. She had always dismissed the subject, declaring there was plenty of time yet. He wanted to get married quickly, so that he could proceed to entire happiness with this fine woman: he wanted it quickly.

'My darling,' he cried gratefully, 'my sweet, as soon as you like. I could be ready in a month. There's a house going on Salem Hill and I've got the money for furniture.'

She looked at him with haunted eyes. 'Not a month,' she said slowly, 'perhaps we want more than a month to prepare.'

'Six weeks then,' he said.

'Soon,' she said, in a curious kind of surging voice, 'soon. Let it be soon. Six weeks! That will be soon enough.' Her hand crept up his arm, the numbness in her face was breaking, her eyes filled with tears. 'Oh, you do want to marry, don't you, Oswald?'

'My dear,' he cried in pain. 'How strange you are!'

She put her face to his to be kissed. Their mouths met. She clung to him desperately.

And she would not go out to buy vegetables off Pugh Gibbons again. She told her mother how he molested her. The mother went to the back-door and roundly denounced the young hawker. Pugh had laughed at her. And Oswald again offered to have a letter sent him.

The weeks went by: autumn came on. There were endless preparations for the wedding. Blodwen, it was true, took little interest in them. She allowed Oswald to arrange and buy everything. She was very calm; and her manner and behaviour changed. She lost her highflown demeanour, she never lost her temper, and her face went a little wan. Now her dark blue eyes seemed deeper and more remote beneath her long brows, and her mouth was flower-soft, red as a geranium, but drooped.

The week before the wedding there was a touch of winter in the air. Blodwen liked the winter. She was as strong as a bear amid the harsh winds and the wild snow and the whips of rain that winter brings to the vales of the hills. She took on added strength in the winter, like a bear.

And one early evening as the wind lashed down through the serried rows of houses huddled in the vale she stood looking out at the hills from an upstairs window of her home. The grey sky was moving and violent over the brown mountains, and the light of evening was flung out like a cry. Her soul crouched within her as though in dread. But her face was lifted like an eager white bird to the hills. She would have to go, she could not stay in the house any longer. She entirely forgot that Oswald was due in a few minutes.

She wound a heavy woollen scarf round her neck and, unknown to her mother and father, who were in the kitchen, she let herself out. And blindly, seeing no one and nothing in the streets, she went on towards the base of the lonely mountains. Slowly the light died into the early wintry evening, the heavens were misted and darkened, moved slower, though in the west a dim exultance of coppery light still loitered.

Her nostrils dilated in the sharp air, but her limbs



thrilled with a fierce warmth. Her feet sank in the withering mignonette-coloured grass of the lower slopes and she climbed lithely and easily the steep pathless little first hill. She was conscious of Pugh Gibbon's allotments surrounding his ramshackle stone house to the left, but she did not look at them. He, however, saw her, rising from his hoeing of potatoes.

The night would soon come. She cared nothing. She wanted to be on the dominant mountain-tops, she wanted to see the distant hills ride like great horses through the darkening misty air. She quickened her steps and her breasts began to heave with the exertion. She had crossed the smaller first hill and was ascending the big lusty mountain behind it. She was quite alone on the hills.

The black jagged rocks that jutted out on the brow of the mountain were like a menace. She began to laugh, shaking out her wild blonde hair; she unwound her scarf and bared her hot throat to the sharp slap of the wind. She would like to dance on the mountain-top, she would like to shake her limbs and breasts until they were hard and lusty as the wintry earth. And she forgot her destination in the world below.

She had reached the top. Night was not yet; and out of the grey seas of mist the distant hills rode like horses. She saw thick massive limbs, gigantic flanks and long ribbed sides of hills. She saw plunging heads with foam at their mouths. She saw the great bodies of the hills and in her own body she knew them.

\*

Oswald sat in the parlour with Blodwen's mother. The gas had been lit and a tiny fire burned in the paltry grate. Oswald looked distracted. He had been waiting over an hour already. It was most strange. It had been

a definite arrangement for him to see Blodwen that evening. There were important things to discuss for the wedding on Saturday. Her mother could offer no explanation, but kept on repeating angrily:

'Why didn't she say she was going out? The provoking girl!'

'Can't you think where she has gone to?' Oswald asked more than once.

'No. Most secretive she's been lately. Secretive and funny. I've put it down to the fuss of preparing. A serious job it is for a girl to prepare for marriage. Some it makes hysterical, some silly and others secretive and funny, like Blodwen.'

'Have you noticed it too?' exclaimed Oswald. 'I've wondered what's the matter with her. But, as you say, it's such a big change for a girl to get married, she must lose her balance now and again.'

'Especially a highly-strung girl like Blodwen,' said the mother. 'For highly-strung she is, though in health as strong as a horse. No trouble of ailments have I had with her. From a baby she has trotted about frisky as a pony.' And to try and soothe him she added gravely: 'Do you well she will, Oswald, a big satisfaction you'll have out of her. And in house matters she can work like a black and cook like a Frenchie; she can make quilts and eiderdowns and wine, and she can cure boils and gripe and other things by herbs as I have cured them in my own husband. Taught her all my old knowledge I have. A girl she is such as you don't see often nowadays. Highly-strung she might be, but handled properly, docile as a little pet mare she'll be.'

'I think we get on all right,' said Oswald nervously, 'though no doubt we'll have our ups and downs.'

'Ay,' said the mother.

The clock ticked away. Oswald kept on glancing at it mournfully, then at his watch, to make sure that *was* the time. The mother looked at him with a sort of admiring bliss in her eyes. He was such a toff, and belonged to such a family. Fancy her Blodwen marrying into the Vaughan family! No wonder she was an envied mother, and people were deferential to her now. She who had been a cook at one time.

'Wherever can she be?' he repeated, sighing.

'I can't think at all,' said Blodwen's mother, sharpening her voice to sympathize with his agitation. 'But I'll tell her of this to-night, I'll tell her, never fear.'

'Oh, don't, please,' he begged. 'We must be gentle with her the next few days, we must put up with her whims.' He looked at her appealingly and added: 'No doubt she'll have a reasonable explanation when she arrives back.'

But Pugh Gibbons, in his old stony house on the hillside, was laying a flower on the white hillock of her belly, with tender exquisite touch a wide flat white marguerite flower, its stalk bitten off, his mouth pressing it into her rose-white belly, laughing.

## *Panic*

BY DAPHNE DU MAURIER

From *The Saturday Review*)

THE hotel was in one of those narrow obscure streets that lead from the Boulevard Montparnasse.

It was a grey, drab house, that shrank away from the pavement and flattened itself between two buildings, as if ashamed, as if conscious of its own squalor. The very sign appeared unwilling to attract attention, as it swung high above the door, in faded gold lettering, *Hôtel*; and then lower down, humble and mean, the word *Confort*.

There seemed no purpose in its being there, no reason for its existence.

There was not even a café in the street, with gay chequered table-cloths spread over little tables, and a large menu, illegible but generous, to welcome a passer-by.

Nothing but the street and the hotel, and next door a shabby fruit shop with dusty windows. Hard green-gages that no one would ever buy, and sad wizened oranges. The flies settled on them wearily, too tired to move.

In the hotel no one stirred. The *patronne* sat huddled at her desk in the dark little office, her fat white face resting on her hands, her mouth open. She breathed heavily; she was nearly asleep.

Who could possibly remain awake in such weather?

Every year it was the same—the fierce, dead heat that descends on Paris like a white blanket in July, stifling the body, stifling the brain. A fly crept on to

her arm, and ran up her shoulder. She was aware of it in her sleep, she shook it away and woke yawning, grumbling to herself, pushing her dyed red hair from her forehead with hot sticky fingers. She fumbled about on the floor, looking for her shoes. She dragged them on, still yawning, not realizing what she was doing.

'The heat has made my feet swell,' she thought stupidly.

She rose from her chair and went to the door. Still not a breath of air. The sky was white, the pavement burnt her shoes.

She stood looking up and down the street.

She could hear the clanging of trams and the screaming hooters of the taxis, as they rattled and shook — part of the ceaseless traffic in the Boulevard Montparnasse.

A taxi broke away from the block, and came down the street, slowly, uncertainly, the driver looking from right to left.

He drew up with a jerk before the hotel.

'Would you like to try here, M'sieu?' he asked; 'it's not much of a place, but I tell you Paris is packed — packed — you will be lucky to find anything to-night.'

The sweat poured down his face. He was tired, uninterested; wouldn't these English people ever be satisfied?

A girl stumbled from the taxi, and looked up at the hotel, and then at the fat, greasy *patronne*, who stood at the door, a false smile of welcome on her face.

'*Vous désirez, Madame?*' she began, her eyes closing together, her tongue running over her lips.

The girl drew away instinctively, and then laughed, in case her companion should notice.

'I don't know — what do you think? It's sordid rather,

The man made a movement of impatience.

'Of course it's sordid, these places always are. What did you expect? But we must decide somewhere.'

He made no effort to conceal his irritation. Why must she persist in being tiresome? Women always wanted things to be romantic, attractive; they liked to drape the truth in pretty colours. She had been difficult all day, silent, not in the right mood. Supposing this adventure was going to be a failure?

He turned to the *patronne*. '*Vous avez une chambre pour ce soir?*' he said in his slow, careful French.

'*Voulez-vous bien entrer, Monsieur. Je tacherai de vous arranger quelque part.*'

'Gaston — Gaston,' she called.

A boy in a dirty shirt appeared, wiping his hands on a towel. He took the two suit-cases from the taxi. The woman went into the dark office, and came back clutching a handful of keys.

'*Une chambre avec une salle de bains . . . ?*' began the girl.

'*Ah! Non — ça, c'est impossible. Pas d'eau coulante ici,*' snapped the woman.

She led the way up the dingy staircase.

'What does it matter?' whispered the man fretfully, 'we can't be particular. . . .'

There was a strange smell in the passage, the air was full of it; it seemed to come from the woman herself.

Stale scent and staler powder. The smell of people who sleep in the afternoon, who do not take off their clothes. And cigarette ash, not thrown away, and over-ripe fruit eaten in bedrooms.

The woman knocked at the door. From within came an exclamation, quickly stifled, and the sound of heavy naked feet crossing the floor. The door opened, about a foot, and a man's head appeared, tousled, damp.

He smiled, showing a row of gold teeth: '*Je regrette, Madame, mais je ne suis pas présentable.*'

The woman laughed. She seemed pleased; she raised an eyebrow.

'*Excusez-moi,*' she murmured, and closed the door softly.

She led the way to a room at the end of the passage: '*C'est tout ce qui reste pour ce soir.*'

It was small and incredibly hot. She threw open the window, which looked upon a narrow courtyard. There were two cats in the yard and a girl washing something under a tap. A large bed, recently made, with a heap of unnecessary bedclothes, stood in the corner of the room. In another corner a washstand — a fat jug with a crack down the middle. There was an ugly pattern on the wall-paper, and a red carpet on the floor. The man glanced uneasily at the girl.

'Sordid, but necessary,' he said, forcing a laugh; 'let's go out and get something to eat.'

They had dinner at a restaurant on the Boulevard Montparnasse. She was not hungry; she poked at her food, and then pushed away the plate with a sigh.

'But look here, you must eat,' he began. 'You scarcely touched anything on the train. What's the matter? You're surely not scared; you, of all people?'

'Don't be silly — of course not. I'm not hungry, that's all.' She turned away and pretended to watch the people passing in front of the restaurant. He glanced at her anxiously. She looked different this evening, quite different from what she had been in London. Perhaps it was because they were alone at last. Nearly always before there had been people, and she had seemed cool, definite, provocative; with a depth of knowledge behind her eyes, a world of experience. This was what

had attracted him. To-night she looked younger, much younger; almost a child. She wouldn't drink anything either. He read very carefully the *carte des vins*. It was impossible to do this sort of thing unless one was a little drunk.

It was all being utterly different from what he had planned. Why couldn't she make an effort? Why bother to come away if this was how she was going to behave? He resented the fact that she was not being attractive to him. Her face was like any other face. He began to suspect he did not want her so very much after all. Oh! but this idiotic feeling would pass; they were both a trifle shaky, he supposed. Funny little things, women; one never knew really what they felt or why.

Funny, but necessary from time to time. It was a long while since he had been so attracted to anyone; he didn't want it to stop now, before anything had happened.

'That's the worst of being temperamental,' he thought, 'one's emotions are so utterly out of control.'

In his mind he drew a picture of himself: odd, eccentric, a bit of a genius, driven by passion, hypnotized by this girl.

The picture intrigued him. '*Garçon*,' he called, shaking the *carte des vins*. '*Garçon*.'

He was beginning to enjoy his dinner.

It was dark when they returned to the hotel. The *patronne* must have retired for the night: the little office was empty. The boy in the dirty shirt appeared from nowhere, yawning, rubbing his eyes.

He watched them curiously as they went upstairs.

'There's something evil about this hotel,' whispered the girl. 'I wish now we hadn't come here.' She laughed, trying to pass it off as a joke.

From one of the rooms they could hear the low murmur



of a woman's voice, and a man's cough. Then silence. A blind rattled somewhere. Although the window was open the heat in their bedroom was unbearable. A ray of moonlight shone on the cracked water jug and on a strip of the ugly wall-paper.

He sat down on a chair and began to take off his shoes.

'This is a terrible place,' he admitted, 'but for God's sake let's try and keep our sense of humour.'

He wished he had drunk a little more; he still felt coldly and insanely sober.

She did not reply. She poured some water into the tooth glass and drank thirstily. Her hands trembled. She did not know why she had come, or what was going to happen; but it was too late to think about that now. She felt tired and sick, and deep down something inside her was cold with fear. Why had she come? Curiosity, adventure, a senseless spirit of bravado. He might have been a complete stranger to her.

'Supposing we're found out?' she said.

'Don't be absurd; no one will ever know, at least, not about me. Didn't you arrange everything on your side?'

Surely she hadn't forgotten or done anything foolish!

'Of course, it's all right.'

She felt as if this were happening to somebody else. This was not she. She was at home, putting the car away in the garage.

'What would happen if they found out?' he wondered uneasily. Perhaps he would be expected to marry her. It was too late now, though, trying to think this out. Why was she putting difficulties in the way?

She sat down on the bed, a pale, frightened-looking child. What an impossible situation.

He crossed over to the basin and started to clean his teeth. He wanted to hit her. Damn women! Why

could they never be in the right mood at the right time? He was not going to give way though. It would not be fair to him. Coming all this way, fagging over to Paris. He supposed he must make some effort to hide his annoyance. He threw down the towel, and sat beside her on the bed.

'Cold feet?' he said carelessly. 'What do you generally do when you do this sort of thing? What have you done before?'

She backed away from him, smiling nervously.

'That's just it. I've never done anything like this before.'

He waited, not understanding. 'What on earth do you mean?'

He felt the colour rise from his throat, spreading over his face.

He shook her arm angrily, his face scarlet. 'If you think you're going to fool me. . . .'

\*

He woke suddenly, startled, dragged from the depth of a sleep that was like death.

What was the matter? Was she dreaming aloud, a nightmare?

'What is it?' he whispered. 'What is it?'

She was breathing strangely, quickly, as if suffocating, and all the while a funny little noise in her throat.

He fumbled with a match, and peered into her face. It was white, ghastly, drained of all colour.

Her hair was wringing wet. Her eyes stared up at him, without recognition, two pieces of glass, no light in them. There was no sound in the room but her terrible choking breathing, inevitable, persistent.

'Be quiet,' he said desperately. 'Be quiet, somebody will hear.'

He left the bed and poured some water into the tooth glass.

'Drink this, darling, drink this.'

The glass rattled against her teeth, the water spilt on her chin. Still she made no sign.

'What shall I do?' he thought helplessly. 'What in Christ's name shall I do?' He crept to the door and listened. The passage was still dark, but a ray of daylight was creeping through an open window.

He stood in the middle of the room. He saw her stay-belt pushed underneath her chemise on the chair. Stupidly the thought ran through his mind: 'Pink, why a pink stay-belt?'

He passed his hand over his forehead. His fingers were wet with sweat. He could hear himself swallow.

Suddenly the breathing stopped. Not a sound came from the bed. He stood motionless, unable to move, unable to think, listening to silence.

A grey light began to filter through the open window. The furniture took shape, he could distinguish the pattern of the wall-paper. He wondered who had chosen it, and if it had been on those walls a long, long time. His brain refused to work properly.

'It's no good standing here,' he thought. 'It's no good standing in the middle of the room.'

She was dead, of course. He knew that. She was dead. Funny — he felt no sort of emotion. Fear had taken it all away. He leant over the bed and gazed at her. She looked pinched and small, her mouth was open. No breath came from her now, no sound. Yes, she was dead. He went over to the basin and washed his face and hands. He wondered senselessly what had killed her. Heart perhaps; she had never looked strong. She should have told him; it was not his fault. No, of course it was not his fault. Had he killed her? He did not know enough about women. He had not realized.

'I don't know what one does quite when a person dies,' he thought, drying his hands on the towel.

He was frightened because he felt no emotion. Perhaps it was repressed, stifled; perhaps something had happened to his brain. He must not allow himself to become hysterical. Supposing he laughed, supposing he laughed in the silence of this dark sinister room, and woke the other people in the hotel. Supposing they crawled in at the door, queer, shadowy figures, peering over the fat shoulder of the *patronne*. The man with the gold teeth, smiling, bowing — '*Je regrette, mais je ne suis pas présentable.*' He could imagine his grey unshaven face, the grin fading away, as he saw the still figure on the bed.

This was awful. He was going to laugh — he was terrified he was going to laugh.

The silly line of an old song, heard years ago, came into his brain:

'Cheer up, Jenny, you'll soon be dead —  
A short life but a gay one.'

Supposing he threw open the door and sang down the passage, 'A short life but a gay one.'

An hysterical giggle rose in his throat, and broke the silence of the room. The sound brought him to his senses. He must dress quickly and get away. He must not be found here with her. The police — and questions, endless questions. The truth being dragged from him, and her family arriving — an appalling inquest — scenes and questions, more questions. There would never be an end to it, never. Panic came upon him, like an unseen hand seizing him by the throat. Why had this terrible thing happened to him? Why should he have been chosen to play this part? If he could get away now, though, no one would ever know. He pulled on his clothes, his fingers

slippery with sweat. There was no reason why his identity should be discovered; he had given no name. The cards still lay on the mantelpiece, waiting to be filled in. He pushed his things into his suit-case and closed the lid. Out of the tail of his eye he saw the dark outline of her body on the bed. He pretended to himself he had not seen. The idea came to him that this scene would stay for ever before his eyes. The small, hot bedroom, the dead girl on the bed, and the ugly paper on the wall behind her head. He turned away, afraid.

He crept down the stairs, his suit-case in his hand, his hat pulled over his eyes. Somewhere a clock struck the half-hour.

He heard a door creak. He flattened himself against the wall, drawing in his breath.

A woman came on to the top passage and stood listening. She was holding something in her hands. Then she stole softly along the passage, and went into a different room.

The man on the stairs waited; it seemed to him that his feet had turned to stone. Once more the vision of the bedroom flashed before his eyes: the silence, the dark figure on the bed.

He left the hotel and started to run. He ran down the street, and into another street, and across the boulevard, and so on into a meaningless procession of streets. Grey houses, all alike, and dreary deserted cafés. This was not the Paris he knew, it was a nightmare in his brain; it was an inferno. And all the while the patter of his feet beat time with his heart to the senseless repeating tune:

‘Cheer up, Jenny, you’ll soon be dead —  
A short life but a gay one.’

He could run no longer. He walked steadily, his bag in one hand, his coat over his arm. Paris woke to another

day, white, blistering, like the days that had gone before. People came into the streets. Sleepy boys rolled aside the shutters of the shops and dusted wearily the tables in the cafés.

Someone leant out of a window and shook a mattress. A woman, her hair falling about her face, brushed the steps of a house with her broom. A yellow dog stretched itself and sniffed at a lamp-post. Traffic began to rattle over the cobble-stones.

The man could go no farther. He sat down, at a table outside a café, and rested his head in his hands. He could remember nothing but that he was tired, so tired that he desired only to lay himself upon the ground and sleep, his head in the gutter.

The drowsy *garçon* stood before him. He heard himself ordering coffee. Trams passed by and a few early taxis.

'A short life but a gay one. A short life but a gay one.' Would the tune never leave him? Senseless, utterly senseless. Yes, he must find some train, and get away, right away. Somewhere down on the Mediterranean. He would be able to write a play there perhaps—do a little work.

He called the *garçon* for his bill. He must go now and find out about trains; he would take the first one that left for the south.

He fumbled in his pockets, staring at the slip of paper. Then a tight band slipped away from his head, leaving his brain clear, cold.

Something, like the clutch of a clammy hand, closed upon his heart. His back weakened. A little trickle of sweat ran down his forehead and crept upon his cheek.

He remembered that he had left his pocket-book and everything that it contained—letters, money, addresses—in the bedroom of the hotel by the Boulevard Montparnasse.

## *In the Know*

BY ARNOLD EDMONDSON

(From *The Manchester Guardian*)

WHEN the distinguished personage opened our village library there was presented to him old Amos, of whom we were proud because he said he remembered the death of the Duke of Wellington. Sometimes Amos claimed even to recall the arrival of tidings about the battle of Trafalgar. But this we regarded as exuberance.

'Permit me, my lord,' said the vicar, when the distinguished personage had told us how pleased he was to open the library and how beneficial it would be, 'to present to you our oldest inhabitant, Mr. Amos Tollinger, who has reached the almost incredible age of 102.'

Amos, with boots polished to Nubian blackness and clothes brushed and sponged by dutiful granddaughters, stumped forward on his stick, removed his hat, and spake these words abruptly and without introduction of any kind whatever:

'I seen Isinglass. I seen 'Ermit's Derby. I seen 'Eenan and Sayers. I seen the Game Chicken. I seen 'em all. Don't tell me nothing.'

The vicar frowned, for this was not the speech he had been teaching painfully to Amos for the last six weeks; but Amos fixed a firm if ancient eye on the distinguished personage, and repeated, 'Don't tell me!'

'I think,' said the vicar, venturing the part of prompter with some desperation. 'I think, Amos, you recall the first appearance of Dickens's works in serial form?'

'What if I do?' retorted Amos, grandly. 'E were only

a book writer. 'Ee weren't a 'orse nor yet a pugeylist. Don't tell me nothing. I seen 'em all.' And then once more regarding the distinguished personage firmly, he remarked, 'I seen your great-granddad.'

Opinions vary about what course would have been most fitting at this awkward point. Some of us hold that the vicar should have given out a hymn or a patriotic song like 'Land of Hope and Glory.' Happily, the situation was saved by the tact of the distinguished personage, who shook Amos warmly by the hand, expressed pleasure at meeting one whose experience was so extensive, and, ending in a lower, confidential tone, added some words which none of us could catch.

Whatever these words may have been, Amos flushed with pleasure, and twice he touched the lingering relics of his forelock.

'Thank ye,' he exclaimed, 'thank ye, sir. I will, too. Yes, I surely will.'

Wherewith, he shook hands once more with the distinguished personage and retired with a beaming face.

The vicar was already presenting another of our rural notabilities when Amos, rising from his seat, again faced the platform to shout out, 'Be sure I will. And thank ye kindly.'

Unluckily for the chairman of the county education committee, who proceeded to address us on the part played by literature in culture and true progress, there ran through the assembly, by some mysterious but not unknown telepathy, first the suspicion, then the certainty that the distinguished personage had 'told Amos a horse.'

But what horse and for what race? Even persons seated at the front turned to stare at Amos as though they would probe the deep recesses of his mind. Those nearer smiled upon him with ingratiating eyes. Amos sat silent.



Indeed, the silence of Amos in the next few days gave offence which we all concealed only by an effort. Unanimous agreement was reached that the horse mentioned to Amos by the distinguished personage must be one entered for the next 'big race'; and bitter things were said when the landlord of the 'Boar' saw suddenly through the mean attitude Amos had chosen to adopt.

'If we're all on it,' he said, 'it'll bring the odds down. Amos is out for long odds. That's what 'e's out for.'

'Then it's an outsider,' cried the postman, enviously; and that evening he called, in passing, at the ancient's cottage.

'I've just come to say there's no letters for you, Amos,' he remarked.

'Never is,' said Amos acidly.

'I should be only too glad to bring them if there was any,' replied the postman. 'Often I've said to myself, "I do wish there'd be a letter for Amos now and then."' Sometimes I've thought of writing you one myself, just as a surprise, like.'

'Rot,' said Amos.

'I suppose,' went on the postman, hurriedly, 'you wuldn't like to tell me the name of that horse for next Wednesday's big race? The one the lord told you. Just you and me in it, you know, Amos.'

'Oh!' exclaimed the old man, 'so that's it, is it? And that's why Mrs. Grant sent me that bottle of eddicated wine out of her shop, is it? Well, you push off. I'm saying nothing to nobody about what the lord told me.'

The news of the bottle of medicated wine diverted some of the ill-feeling concentrated hitherto on Amos to Mrs. Grant. It was held she had been guilty of something like sharp practice and had tried to steal a march upon the rest of us. Yet, perhaps, this was merely the hatred of

dullards for more enterprising methods than their own. At any rate, that night the landlord of the 'Boar' called on Amos with a bottle which, apparently, was more acceptable than its predecessor. For as the donor departed Amor pressed his hand and said, 'I 'ope it will never be wrote of me that I was one to forget my friends, and what the lord said you shall know next Tuesday, Joe, but not afore.'

'So's not to shorten the odds,' replied the landlord, knowingly. And he departed, well content.

Other men were observed from day to day hovering in the neighbourhood of the ancient's cottage; and parcels varying in bulk were passed, with whispered conversations, over the back fence in the evening's dusk. Amos accumulated ducks, chickens, and even sucking-pigs, all of which his son disposed of in the market of the neighbouring town. Yet only once did Amos seek deliberately to exploit his secret, and this was when he called upon the village tailor.

'Albert,' he said, 'these trousis of mine isn't what they was, now is they?'

'Seemingly not,' replied the tailor.

'There's some in this village who would give all they 'as, almost, to know what it was the lord said when me and 'im was talking private,' said Amos. 'Now, suppose I was to tell you first, Albert, 'ow about a pair of trousis?'

The tailor thought the matter over carefully. 'All right,' he said, at last, 'I'll do 'em half-price — six an' sixpence — but money down now.'

Amos slowly counted out the silver, whispered 'It's Cormorant,' and left the shop to reveal his secret to the now deserving many. Thus ere nightfall all the village knew of Cormorant. Alas! in the race next day the horse was nowhere. For what the distinguished personage

had in fact said to Amos was merely, that he hoped he would happily attain a record age. The village, ignorant of this, reviled his name unjustly. Amos, also suffering in popularity, bore up most cheerfully until a little later on he went to see the tailor.

'Is them trousis done?' he asked.

'You're getting no trousis from me,' retorted Albert. 'No trousis nor yet no money back. So now you know.'

'What!' shouted Amos, 'No trousis nor money back? I'll summons you. I'll summons you to the magistrits, and when I get you there, my word if I don't just tell 'em!'

'Yes,' snapped Albert, defiantly, tell 'em what the lord said.'

## *A Night at Sligo's*

BY A. E. FISHER

(From *The Midland*)

THIS is the story of Sadie, and of how she forgot. Sadie was a waitress in Burke and Sligo's Bon Ton Chop House, and a very good waitress, too. But that night (all this happened over one hundred years ago, in London) — that night she was tired; her legs had a faint ache in them, because of too much dancing the evening before, and her eyes smarted a little, for she had not slept long into the morning.

'Two dishes of veal,' she said to herself, 'and her in the black shiny gown with them bits o' speckled lace wants more butter, and the nob over at the far end has to have a cup of broth, and toast good and piping, and that lamp needs oil, and there's that nasty boy making another spot on the cloth! His eggs, I guess. Have to cover it — what?'

'Sadie! S'st! Where'd you put the wine card?' The cash girl was plucking at her sleeve.

'Oh, over on the third table — no, the little one — that's it!'

Pushing the door open with her hip and shoulder, she passed through into the kitchen and gave her order to the cook, standing regal before his stove with splendid disregard for everything in the world but eggs, and the proper flip-flap of the hand to turn them.

'Two veals and a small broth!' Sadie screamed into the thick warm vapour which hung over everything, where-

upon Joe, the cook's helper, wiped his big hands, glistening with butter, and took up his knife.

'Two of 'em? Two?'

'And a small broth. Please.'

While she waited Sadie kept her gaze fixed on the little round pane in the door, through which she could see if any new people came in. Joe hummed a tune hideously somewhere far up in the cavities of his big purple nose, while he sliced veal and looked at Sadie's back (she knew this — she could feel his hog-eyes there). 'Mmmm-hmmm, mmmm-hmmm,' was the sound made by Joe as his glance flickered over Sadie.

'O lud, there's six come in . . . seven! Pish! Here, Joey!' and she took the veal, some broth, some butter, some toast, and hurried into the dining room with them.

'Six, and one's seven . . . Lud, ain't he the *swell*!' A big man in buckskin breeches and a mighty coat of bottle green, erupting at the top into magnificent frilly foam which was a cravat, and bursting at the bottom into purple striped splendour which was a velvet waistcoat, was seating five big women, quite lost in fluffs and laces, at the big table in the centre of the room. And at once all the other diners seemed blotted out by this multiple gleaming splendour; everyone grew smaller, began to turn grey, though some, perhaps retained a slight green tinge.

'My top hat!' said ~~this~~ fine fellow, giving it to Sadie as though conferring the Order of St. George upon her.

She took it with great care; she bore it in both hands to the best rack in the room; she did not see anybody; she did not see anybody at all.

Certainly, with the rich splendour of these people weighing upon her, she could not have been expected to

notice the small young man who was drawing up a chair at a small table in the farthest corner.

Still dazed, Sadie brought the lady in shiny black her extra butter, and she hurriedly served the nobby toff his broth and piping toast, and she poured out more milk for the nasty boy, wearing a simper as she did so, for his mother seemed to expect that all people should simper at her swollen son . . . then the two veals, and then, at last, water for the splendid six.

How tired she was! Waiting for these mighty people to tell what they should have, she dared forget them for a moment, and to think of Arthur. Arthur's moist hand, Arthur's arm tight around her waist, supporting her . . . Arthur asking for one dance after another, and riding home at last with her in a hackney coach, even though it cost two bob. She thought her frock had looked very nice; the bit of pink gauze and the flounce caught up gave it a stylish touch. . . . 'Your order, please, sir?'

The big man was certainly *somebody*. Sadie forgot about Arthur's arm, his laughing, what he said as they passed the gate, even his kiss, as she looked down again at the big man and saw the soft light shine on his smooth head, causing all its hairless expanse to glisten; she gazed at the excellent eruption of his cravat, marked the fineness of the cloth in his bottle-green coat, peered in covert wonder at his mighty buckskin breeches. He had a rusty sort of voice. He said, 'You had better brring us this,' and 'You had better brring us that,' in a way that would indicate to any waitress who ever lived, and to all diners who cared to listen; and especially to each of his big, mum, but very fine women, that he was somebody indeed. 'You can brring us the calf's liver,' he told Sadie, and all the five big women looked out at her from the caverns of their hats as he said it, and she could see in

their eyes that they all liked calf's liver very much. 'And tea. And turnip. *And* biscuits, eh?' The five agreed that there should of course be biscuits.

Sadie brought them knives and forks, the best ones, and then, suddenly noticing the small man in the corner, she went to his table and asked him what he would have, please?

He sat with his chin resting upon one hand, huddled a little forward in his chair, looking down moodily at the cloth. Quite an ordinary young man, in quite ordinary clothes. Still, she gave him water just the same. Arthur's kiss, Arthur's kiss, and her quick sharp breath when she saw that he was going to at last (she had the feel of that aching breath still in her chest) . . . the guttering street lamp at her corner where the coach turned and swayed, and the crazy shadows rushing on ahead . . . then the tiny dry squeak of Arthur's new boots as they went up the walk, and Arthur's arm holding her . . . tired, tired . . . oh, life is awful, but there's fun in it a little of the while . . .

'Your order?'

He wanted only scones and tea.

Sadie hurried into the steamy bright kitchen, another world, shut out by the swinging door; another world, where smoky lamps, giving off an odour of burnt oil, shone down on Food, on sweating people whose business was Food, and whose life was all Food too. They shone most particularly, of course, upon Jean the cook, because he was the largest. Jean was a living tribute to Food, and what could be done with it. Jean lived with Food, by Food, for Food and worshipped it humbly as his god. Not for Jehovah, or Jehovah's son (who, he was told on good authority, had died for him) did Jean feel as much reverence as for a good, reeking roast, or for pink tongues

wrenched out of oxen's maws. Food, Food, Food. For Joe, too, Food was a fearsome and a marvellous commodity, although he had eyes for a shapely hip, or a creamy throat, like Sadie's. Beef, veal, pork, lamb, ham and coddled eggs; steam, steam, steam and copper kettles, and spidery cracks in the ceiling, and Sadie's tired, tired legs and her smarting eyes . . . and heat, and melted butter, and smoking grease, and slimy pots and pans heaped up waiting in the noisome sink for Joe to rattle them about and make them clean. . . .

'Six calfs, please, Joe,' said Sadie. 'And are there any more biscuits in the top tray?'

'Hmm, hmmm, hmmmmmm, hees jolee baw, yes, yes, yes,' Joe said. 'Six calfs, cook eh? Here, here's you deesh for biscuits.' Joe had a voice good enough for a church. 'And she say I muryyoo, my jollie baw,' chanted he. 'One calfs. Let me 'ave it. It will take off the drop with my apron. S's's't! Two calfs.'

'Hurry up, you, Joe! They're very important people out there want that calf's liver!'

'What? You tell me?' cried Joe, dropping his knife and glaring. Sadie had violated the etiquette of the kitchen. 'Tell *me* hurry, eh? Hooh! I can get better job than this damn job.' He spat into a convenient bucket. 'Tell ME hurry!'

'Rot, Joey, dear, don't mind it — I wasn't in my bed till three this morning.'

'Ah? What you doing before you go to bed that time, eh? I ask before, not after. I do not want I should ask of you, what it is you do *after* you go to bed, hah, hah, hah, no, poof! No, no. You go to the dance weeth that feller, eh?'

'Well, what if I did? Here you are. Put 'em on the tray, will you, Joey? You're a wag, ain't you, Joey? You'd like to know, wouldn't you?'



'Six calfs!'

Sadie swept out with the calf's liver and the biscuits, swinging her hips a little. 'H'mff! That greasy Joel Anybody'd think he thought he was a dream the way he eyes you!'

Back into the world of men and women waiting for their calf's liver, and their biscuits, and their tea — the big man rustily talking, and one of the women, perhaps his wife, answering loudly yes and no in such a cultivated voice — Lord! It made you feel how little you knew after all to hear 'em go on like that. Serving them, she was extra careful not to brush their elbows, especially those splendid ones in tight bottle-green. The big man was tucking his napkin into his waistcoat and making little noises with his lips. He liked calf's liver very much too, you could see that. Sadie asked him respectfully (just as he finished chewing a rather large piece of liver and was swallowing it . . . she knew how to time it, she did) if everything was to his taste, and if there was anything more now? To which, having swallowed, the magnificent fellow answered that everything was perfectly satisfactory, perfectly, and smiled upon her very benignantly indeed. Sadie liked that — she liked to have nice, important, kind old gentlemen smile at her — it made her feel young, and foolish, and it made her conscious of the rare, fresh sweetness that she knew was hers. Young, foolish, sweet, and tired . . . not much fun in this serving business. If Arthur could only get a place that paid a lot, and married her soon! As she tripped out she whispered it in time to her quick steps: 'Soon, soon, soon! O soon, Arthur, soon!'

The kitchen again, and pots and pans, and a kettle full of cabbage on the stove, and Jean busy again over more Food, and Joe looking with hog-eyes at the swelling

curves of her breasts where the tight-laced bodice revealed them — pity he couldn't find enough to look at in the dirty corner he was supposed to wash his kettles in!

Lud, more people! Two old ladies. Oh, yes, Mrs. Crammer and her sister from the country, going toward the table under the arch, where Mrs. Crammer always sat. Mrs. Crammer would want crumpets and jam, and a pot of tea, very hot and strong; but her sister (what a tight old body she was, and how she held her chin up!) — there was no telling what she'd want.

Sadie hurried out, pink from the kitchen's vaporous heat, her heels clicking sharply on the floor, her fresh, eager, shy smile ready for them. They liked her. Oh, she knew that! It warmed their old eyes up when they looked at her, and made them remember how they had enjoyed life when they were young and sweet and foolish. But she felt a terrific yawn coming just as she opened her mouth to speak a bright 'Good evening, Mrs. Crammer, and you too, ma'am,' and in order to check it she had to press her lips together very tight. The yawn surged, was smothered, died, the water came into her eyes, and it was safe to speak. 'Good evening, Mrs. Crammer, and you too, ma'am.'

'Ah, good evening to you, child, and we'll be having our tea and crumpets and a bit o' the plum if so be as you have any to-night still,' said Mrs. Crammer in her high squeaky old voice.

'Oh, yes, ma'am, certainly, I'll . . . is it strong tea you wanted?'

'Ah yes.'

'Oh, and the cakes buttered?'

'Ah yes, the cakes buttered.'

So Sadie went to the kitchen again for tea, and a bit o' the plum, and buttered cakes. Six o'clock. Three hours

more, and then she could rest, maybe (if she wasn't too tired) and sleep. She bent down out of sight of Joe to rub her tired legs under her long dimity skirt, and try to get that tingling out of them. Ah well, they could dance, anyway! More than one person, and not the ordinary kind either, had turned to look as she tripped so gracefully in the quadrille, or gave herself to the lascivious embraces of the wicked waltz. Drat it! That tea! Oh, and jam! Plum, was it? M'm, yes, and good, too. Oh! The crumpets weren't all toasted! And tea for six . . . Lord, she'd have to . . .

She opened the door in the same manner as always — funny she never had to think about it — standing sideways, pushing with shoulder and hip, swinging the right heel to catch it, and hastened to bring Mrs. Crammer and her sister their Food. Then back to the kitchen in flight, so that the splendid man and his five fine women might have their tea precisely when their liver was done with.

The cash girl touched her arm as she passed the desk. 'S't! Hey, Sadie! That corner table! Have you . . .?'

'Oh, bother! I forgot all about him! Well, I've got to . . .' She went on into the kitchen; those big six mustn't be kept waiting anyway.

She returned with their tea, and gave it to them. The bottle-green man wanted more butter, and some very hot water, if she would be so good?

'Surely, surely, sir, directly!'

That was the way to give an order — you could tell *he* had been to places! She fetched the butter and the hot water.

Then at last she brought the lone man his tea. He *was* ordinary looking. His mouth, for instance, was like any other mouth, his hair, too, and his eyes . . . except that they were very large and clear and steady, so that you wanted

to look into them a long while, only of course you couldn't be looking into people's eyes like that all the. . . .

'So you forgot me again,' he murmured, as she arranged his dishes. His voice was low; she was not sure of what he had said.

'Pardon . . . did you say . . .?'

'I was here once before, and you forgot me then, too.' The man smiled at her.

'Oh — I — did I? I'm sorry.'

'Pray don't be, the least bit.'

Sadie got away from him, a little confused. Well, what if she had? A body couldn't . . . and anyway, better to keep him waiting than somebody important and rich, like him in bottle green. Smiled at her, too! These young kind always trying that sort of . . . Oh *drat* it, Mrs. Crammer wanted something else from the way she was looking. . . .

Across to Mrs. Crammer with a sharp tapping of heels, and a kind smile ready. 'Yes, Mrs. Crammer, ma'am?'

'Child, I'd like some more jam if you would be so good.'

'Oh, yes, Mrs. Crammer, I surely will!'

Bother! It was these extra trips back and forth that got you so tired you couldn't climb upstairs to bed when the day was over. Back and forth, back and forth, through the swinging doors into the kitchen, and out again, and back again . . . Lord, if Arthur only *would* find a good paying place, there wouldn't be any more of this tramping over hard floors with heavy plates weighing on you, and setting them down, and picking them up again when people were through, and tramping with them to the kitchen, so that they could be washed right up and ready for you to carry back, to be dirtied, and picked up, and piled, and lifted, and returned to the kitchen, and washed, and picked up, and piled, and lifted . . . Just that, over and over and over . . . If she had to go on doing it much longer she'd

. . . still, of course if she weren't tired out all the time it wouldn't be so bad. Some days she didn't mind it much. Oh, well, you couldn't have everything. Old Mrs. Crammer could have all the jam she wanted, and be waited on, and smiled at, and helped, and spoken to sweet, but could she dance? Who'd want to ask *her* for the last dance, and then go home with her, and kiss her? Well, nobody would: not anybody; even cook would have better sense.

'Here's your jam, Mrs. Crammer, ma'am.'

'Thank'ee, thank'ee, dear, very kindly.'

Yes, anybody'd be a fool to want to dance with *her*.

The man she had forgotten was drinking his tea, sipping it. She saw him looking at her, and when she passed his table she stopped and asked him if everything was all right.

'Oh, indeed! I am happy now. Only — I shouldn't like to be so easily forgotten.'

'I'm sorry. I won't forget you again. Some of the people, I know their names, and that makes it a lot —'

'Then shall I tell you mine?'

'Yes, sir?' Sadie thought it best to be polite to them, and anyway they always found some excuse to talk. Well, if they knew about her and Arthur, and what Arthur had said last night, and if they could once see her dancing with him in her pink gown, maybe they wouldn't be so free. . . .

'Yes, sir, and what is your name?'

'It is John Keats,' he answered.

'Pardon, sir?' Her moist lips, her whole body, were thrilling at that moment to Arthur's kiss.

'John Keats.'

'Yes, sir, thank you.' How Arthur's hand had trembled as it rested on her shoulder! She had always wondered if

he got gay with other girls she knew nothing of, but after last night she did not think so. No! Arthur was hers, hers, hers . . . and her heels clicked in time to it, jubilant, as she walked back to the kitchen. Hers, hers, hers! Soon, soon, soon!

'What you think about all to-night, eh? My God, you always go round like that, Sadie? Maybe your little boy not like you last night?' Joe was the comedian of the kitchen.

'Oh, go do your dishes!' Sadie muttered wearily. 'You think you're a great wag, don't you, Joey? Why don't you tend to your dishes?'

She turned to glance through the little pane. 'Oh, drat it! Two more!'

'You go do *your* dishes!' chortled Joe. 'You hurry up, will you? Hurry go do your dishes, Sa-dee, hah, hah, hah. Look, look, look, see Sa-dee go quick get some more dishes. Hah, hah, hah.'

'Oh, you're funny, ain't you!'

She shoved the door open with a vicious thrust of her elbow. That greasy Joe! He thought he was some fine fellow, he did!

The new people plumped themselves down near the important party, who were now lingering over their biscuits. They looked important and rich, too. She went to them, her smile ready. "Good evening, and what will it be, please?"

'Some liver and cabbage and cake for both of us,' said the new man, emphasizing the word 'both' very strongly. Married, Sadie guessed. Yes, they were married, you could tell that. But of course it wasn't that way with everybody. When she and Arthur were married there wouldn't be anything like that—they'd go on loving, and loving. . . .

On the way to the kitchen she stopped at the table in the corner; for the small man had finished his tea, paid the cash girl, and was now walking in leisurely fashion toward the door.

He stopped just under the lamp for a moment; and its unsteady yellow light rested on his face. Then he went out, slowly.

Why had he told her his name? Queer, that was. Well, you couldn't stop them from talking to you. What was it, now? H'm. John . . . John . . . No, she couldn't remember. Oh well, little things like that didn't matter — if you spent all your life trying to think of things that came up during the day, why, you'd go off your head, you would. And anyway, what was the good? Nothing ever happened, much. Go off your head, sure, remembering everything; especially being tired and sleepy, the way she was. Tired! It would be the death of her, this tramping! Oh, well, a good rest to-night would set her up again. She gathered up the dirty dishes the man had left, and went out with them to the kitchen.

## *Right of Way*

BY H. W. FREEMAN

(From *The London Mercury*)

WILLIAM LAYZELL first came to the parish in a caravan. He used to encamp on the little triangular stretch of green about a mile from the village, and having spent a day or two there hawking tin saucepans in the neighbourhood or making clothes-pegs out of hazel twigs, he would move on to another pitch. After a time, however, his visits became longer and more frequent. Layzell was not a pure gipsy and the strain of house-dwelling blood in him was strong enough to make him turn from the vagrant life and hanker after a fixed place of abode. But cottages were not easy to get, his living was not over-remunerative and never having paid rent in his life before, he could not bring himself to do so now: patience was forced upon him.

The pitch on the green gradually became permanent, the caravan serving as a fixed headquarters from which he made his journeys in an old dogcart, hawking and dealing, or doing an occasional job of rat-catching. In course of time he knocked up a rough wooden shelter to house his pony and cart in winter-time. This was, strictly speaking, illegal because the green was common land: but the village people paid no heed. They no longer exercised their grazing rights on the green; Layzell was as honest, quiet a neighbour as they could wish, and often quite useful to them. Then one winter the caravan, which was growing old, began to let in water through the roof. Before repairing it, Layzell with his wife and only son — unlike his race he had not bred plentifully — took refuge



in their cartshed for a few nights and discovered a taste for solid earth under their beds. The hut was strengthened and the caravan was not repaired.

Some thirty years after his first appearance on the green — William was past sixty now — there was no trace of the long derelict caravan to be seen, and the collection of sheds which William had erected bore a very fair resemblance to an ordinary tarred weather-board cottage with stable and chicken-house at the side, all set in the middle of a flourishing kitchen garden. His occupations too had acquired a much more settled character. He did much less hawking now and sold a good deal of vegetables and poultry to the shops in the neighbouring market town. One link with the road he still preserved. Whenever any other gipsies came that way, they were always welcome to pitch on the green and take a bucket of water from his pond for their horses; but after one night William felt that he had done his duty by his race and they were encouraged to move on. William was a householder now.

One morning as he was feeding his chickens, he noticed a wagon come up from the village and draw on to the green. A couple of men under the direction of the head gamekeeper from the Hall, a bad-tempered old man with a paralysed arm, began to unload a heap of posts and wire. William, having stared at them for some time, put his hands in his pockets and sauntered over to them.

‘What’s the job, Sam?’ he asked casually, but full of inward apprehension.

‘Going to put a fence round this bit of land,’ replied the gamekeeper shortly.

‘What for?’

‘To keep the gipsies off,’ said the gamekeeper. ‘That stubble over there belong to Cap’n Hoylett and he’ve lost several birds lately.’

'But that's common land,' protested William.

'Maybe that is,' retorted the gamekeeper, 'but folks in the village are only too glad to have the gipsies kept off; so Cap'n Hoylett's a-doing it for 'em.'

'Oh, is he?' sneered William. 'I know all about that game. He wants the green for himself, I know that, and he've got no right; that's common land.'

'I don't care what that is,' growled the gamekeeper. 'That's a-going to be fenced: and I shouldn't say too much if I was you or you might find your own bit of ground inside the fence too.'

'That ain't right, I tell you.' William went back indoors, swearing to himself.

A week passed and the fence was up. As soon as the workmen had disappeared, William and his son, Albert, issued from the garden with two axes and a pair of wire-cutters. They worked all through the night and dawn was breaking when they turned in to bed, leaving a litter of tangled wire and shivered posts on the green behind them.

At midday the old gamekeeper arrived and stormed at them until his starched blue dickey broke loose from his waistcoat, flapping his withered arm with rage. William listened to him quietly enough, full of malicious satisfaction.

'I'm within my rights,' he said, when he could get a word in, 'and don't you get excited. You know what'll happen if you have another stroke.'

The old man at length raged himself out and went away threatening.

In due course William was prosecuted, not for hewing down the squire's fence, but for encroaching upon the common land and building a house upon it. He consulted a lawyer and awaited the issue with serenity. It emerged

from the case that William was a 'squatter,' that he had encroached upon the common land, but since no one had questioned his tenure of the plot for the twenty years and more that he had occupied it, he could not be disturbed now: the house and land were his for good. Such was the law, and so indisputable that it was idle for the squire to carry the case any farther. He made one more attempt to put a fence round the green, but William and his son hewed it down once more. Then he cut off their drinking water. The common pump was in the village, a mile away from the green by road: but by a short cut across a ploughed field and a piece of the park belonging to the Hall it could be reached in less than ten minutes. There was no doubt of the right of way, which William had used for more than twenty years, as he forcibly explained to the old gamekeeper who had been entrusted with the task of warning him off. William made preparation for another prosecution. Quite a simple affair, the lawyer said, if he could find witnesses to establish that he had used the footpath for twenty-one years. William returned to the village and began to canvass for witnesses, but he was grievously disappointed. No one in the parish would come forward to give evidence against the squire: they all held their cottages and a good many their employment at his favour. It was no use risking a prosecution under such conditions. William sullenly abandoned his right to the footpath, and to save himself the trouble of fetching water from the village by road, he bought himself a filter and drank his own pond water. The squire had won this time, but William did not forget his defeat.

William Layzell looked out of his cottage window at the old gamekeeper who was sticking thorn branches in the stubble across the green to prevent poachers from netting

the game. William swore under his breath. Two years of pond water had not disagreed with him — there were old people in the village who on principle drank nothing else: but the footpath across the stubble, long since ploughed up, still rankled with him. He balefully watched the doddering old man. It was time he was in the grave: they said another stroke would be the death of him. A useless race of men, gamekeepers, in William's view; all that woodcraft and quickness of eye wasted in the service of people who were the poor man's enemy, who jostled him off their land and suspected every movement he made — all because they wanted complete privacy to kill in abundance. The old man seemed more unsteady than usual to-day: he was continually catching his foot in the stubble and almost tripping himself up. At length he reached the lip of the ditch and stood for a moment, leaning on his gun. Then, as if seized with a sudden convulsion of pain, he raised his hand to his forehead, letting the gun drop, and reeled over into the ditch. William Layzell strolled reflectively across the green with his hands in his pockets: if it was a stroke indeed, there was no need to hurry. He found the old man stretched out along the bottom of the ditch, clawing feebly at the grass on the bank with his one good hand. His eyes were closed and his lips frothy.

'What's the matter, Sam?' said William, looking critically down at him.

A vague flicker of consciousness returned to him and he half-opened his eyes. He struggled to speak.

'Home, home,' was all he could say.

'All right, we'll take you home,' said William consolingly. 'I'm now going to fetch the pony.'

He strolled back to the house and having drawn himself a glass of beer, sat down and lit his pipe. Ten

minutes later he strolled back to the ditch. The old man was groaning, but his hand no longer moved.

'Sam!' called William.

The old man opened his eyes.

'Home,' he muttered.

'All right, Sam,' said William, 'we're now catching the pony. The ditch ain't wet.'

William went back to the house and smoked for a full hour before returning to the ditch. The old man was quite still. William stepped down and felt his heart: it did not beat. He walked back to the garden where his son was lifting potatoes.

'Albert,' he said, 'go you and put the pony in the cart and look sharp. I'm a-taking the gamekeeper home. He ain't well.'

Between them they carefully wrapped the dead body in an old tarpaulin and placed it in the bottom of the trap. William then took a large square hen-coop and putting three hens in it, laid it on top of the body.

'That cover it up like,' he said, 'don't it, boy?'

Albert nodded.

'Now, open that there gate for me,' he said.

'Ain't you going by road, father!' Albert stared.

'Not me,' said William. 'Do you hurry up.'

He drove off across the stubble along the line of the old footpath and through another gate into the little tongue of parkland which separated the stubble from the village. Half-way across he began to swear, for fifty yards away along the track he was following, he could see the squire, Captain Hoylett, approaching him with a gun under his arm; but he drove steadily on until they met. The squire seized William's pony by the bridle.

'What's the meaning of this?' he shouted. 'You know

you've no right here on foot. What the devil are you doing in a cart?'

'Your gamekeeper have bought these hins,' mumbled William, 'so I thought I'd bring 'em along.'

'Well, there's the road, isn't there?' raged the squire. 'I won't have you driving on my park: I've had quite enough trouble with you already. Back you go, the same way as you came.'

'But that's work for the Hall,' protested William, taking a pin from the lapel of his coat and calmly picking his teeth.

'I don't care if it is,' replied the other. 'I'm going to see you off the place this minute. Besides I don't know what we want with your hens at this time of year. Round you go!'

'All right,' grumbled William. 'Let me get down and turn her round. Stand clear of her hid: she's uncommon fresh.'

He clambered down from the cart as the squire moved aside, and pausing by the shaft to adjust a twisted trace, under cover of his body he drove the pin he was carrying full into the pony's flank. She plunged for a moment and then, putting her head down, bolted off along the track for the opposite hedge. William made no attempt to stop her, but shaded his eyes with his hand and stared after her.

'I've never knowed her do that afore,' he said.

'Well, you are a fool,' said the squire irritably, 'if you can't look after your own horse. Why didn't you go for her head?'

William ignored the question.

'Why, she've stopped now, sir,' he said, still gazing after his trap. 'There she is a-nibbling the hedge by the stile.'

'Well, now you can go back the way you came to the road,' said the squire, 'and then you can walk to the village and fetch your horse and cart back. I'll tie 'em up to the stile myself and you can think yourself lucky to get 'em back at all.'

William laughed outright.

'Oh, no, no, sir,' he said, 'it ain't like that. I'm now going to fetch her myself.'

'I forbid you!' shouted the squire, losing his temper again.

'You can't do it,' said William.

'Why can't I?'

'Cause this is a right of way — I've just made it.'

'What?'

William carefully replaced the pin in the lapel of his coat.

'Yessir,' he replied. 'In that there cart is the dead corpse of old Sam, your gamekeeper — he had a stroke down at mine this morning — and now, I tell you, sir, this is a right of way, and as I carried him in a cart, that's now a right of way for carts as well as a footpath. So I reckon we're quits.'

William walked off to his pony, leaving the squire dumb with rage and amazement.

It was all as he had said. There was something of a scandal about it, but the corpse had crossed the park, the right of way was definitely established and lest anyone should forget it, William Layzell took care to drive along it at least once a day, with a triumphant grin for the new head gamekeeper whenever he passed him. Captain Hoylett never crossed his path again, but he made one last attempt to keep William off his land by turning an old, savage bull on to that part of the park. It was a subtle move, because although by law he was

liable for any harm the bull might do, he was not liable for it till it was done, and any compensation would be poor comfort for the sufferer. But even that did not daunt William Layzell. As soon as he heard of it, he set out across the park with his son and both their guns, and when the bull attacked them, they shot it dead. After that they had the path to themselves and all the spring water they wanted.

Ten years later William Layzell died, and his son, finding work in another district, sold the house and holding to a local agent, from whom it eventually passed into the hands of Captain Hoylett's son, who had inherited the manor. The wooden house was pulled down, the garden along with the rest of the green was enclosed, and the right of the way to the village was suppressed once more without the raising of a single protest.



## *Penny Whistle*

BY OLIVER GOSSMAN

(From *Story*)

I REMEMBER that New Year (said the widow Kidd) because we had snow. That's rare with us. We don't go in much for diversions hereabouts.

And those houses opposite weren't there then. That was a field, the ten-acre field that lay all aslant uphill to the skyline. To the right you could just see the tops of the trees around Craig's farm.

Everything was white that afternoon. A good three o'clock it must have been, for I had my early tea on the hob. And it was going to be whiter, so to speak, for the sky was heavy and it was trying to snow again: that powdery snow. My windows were banked up white like my pillows here are now. And there were bits of snow, as big as your fist, on every one of the knobs along the top of my railing out there.

Being as deaf as you like when I want my own peace and my kettle's singing at a good fire, I wouldn't have heard that old man at all if I hadn't thrown up the side window to break up a bit of bread I didn't just need for any scary birds that might see it.

And there he was, the only human in sight. If human he is, thinks I.

But human enough he was in all conscience. Just a beggar man and a very old one at that. He had a beard, and a muffler, and a long coat, and a measly old hat, and he was standing there all on his lonesome, playing a penny whistle with his aged fingers.

Now I'm not fond of music myself much. And if there's one thing I can't abide it's Christmas tunes out of season and played just for money. And he wasn't even playing a Christmas tune. It was 'Scots wha hae,' if I'm a judge.

What's he doing that for? thinks I.

Those houses opposite weren't there then; there weren't any windows for folk to throw pennies to him from, wrapped up in paper.

Then and there thinks I in my heart: 'You old vagabond!' For no sooner did he see that open window than he put down his tin whistle and began to wrestle with my gate, shoving it back against the snow.

So it's me he's making for! thinks I.

There he stood, right in the middle of my front plot. A beggar man and an old one: though you never can be sure. But you have a right to shut your door on an unknown stranger: you can't shut a wee bit window on anybody. At least not in the daytime, to my mind. And what with the frost and the snow and the cold, and what with his playing the whistle, it looked like the spittle was freezing on his beard.

So I said: 'I'm going to give you a sixpence,' says I; 'it's not for a widow woman to grudge cheer to an old man. And you'll be all the better,' I says, 'for a dish of tea.'

He was a very old beggar man. But he couldn't see, not from where he was, the man's hat and coat and walking stick I've always kept prominent in the lobby-stand all these years I've been a widow. So for safety's sake I says: 'You might have come inside for it if only my man were come home from his work.'

He was too old a man to notice that mistake of mine about a widow woman having a man expected home from his work.

'The Lord reward ye, ma'am,' he says. 'I'm sure I'm much obliged to you.'

He was wearing knitted mittens, and it seemed to do him good to hold the hot cup of tea in his meagre hands while he blew on the tea itself. Then I had a notion of my own, and with his second cup I asks him if he would like a drop of rum in it.

'I'm not a man of dissipation, ma'am,' he says, 'but you offer me a cinder in me tea, and I thank you kindly for it.'

That spirit lit up his aged cheeks, I do declare. 'It goes round inside me,' he says, 'like wedding-bells.'

'Here now,' I said, leaning out, and I got my sleeve all touched up with snow, 'you just stuff this bread and bacon, cold though it is, into that pocket.'

'Not that one, ma'am,' he says, 'that one's got no bottom to it. This other's my pocket for things. And there's one soul will pray for you to-night, lady; if that's not presuming.'

Now I declare, there he was at the gate and he was so very old a man he wouldn't have remembered it if I hadn't remembered it suddenly myself, that all the time I'd forgotten to give him it.

'Your sixpence!' I cries. 'Are you daft?'

And what do you think (Mrs. Kidd asked) my old Father Christmas does after that? He stops dead in the middle of the roadway, with the snow falling on his shoulders, and begins to set up his 'Scots wha hae' again!

So I shouts:

'Not another note for me, old man! You get on your ways while there's light to see by.'

And down goes my window to keep the cold out.

But what way do you think that old man takes? Along our road? Not him.

No; he went through a break in the fence and into the ten-acre field that was lying out there all white up to the skyline.

Now bother, thinks I, what is the old zany going that way for? And if so, why doesn't he go round by the farm road?

True for you, says I to myself, the snow on the field is not yet all but ankle deep; whereas with the north wind that brought the fall in the morning and last night, the ditches of that road must be solid drifts that might bury that old man once and for all.

But why that way at all? I keeps wondering. And I keeps watching him. The snowfall wasn't so thick and I could still see him when he had got more than half way up. Yet the snow was thick enough, and, thinks I, before he gets to the top his first footprints will be all white again. Then 'True for you again, sirs,' says I; 'if it's not Craig's farm he's going to, or perhaps the ploughman's cottage beyond that.'

For it's farms and farmers that sometimes still have room for a very old man like that when all your rows of semi-detached villas, in the nature of things, can't accommodate him.

Widows are a special case (added Mrs. Kidd).

Anyway, he didn't go to the farm. The last glimpse I had of him he was going up to the left to where the hill road branches off, if he could find it. Then it struck me what he might be up to.

Susan, thinks I, that old man knows as well as you that apart from the wintry weather that's the shortest cut — by the refuse destructor that used to be a copper mine, through the pine copse and past the cemetery — to the old turnpike road where Smithston is. For Smithston is our poor's-house; for the matter of that it's our asylum as well. I had my second notion that day.

'Lord!' says I, 'that very old man he's making for the poor's-house.' And with that I let down my blind on him.

Next morning was as bright a one as you could wish to begin a year with (said the Widow Kidd). I had my window open again to see what the birds had made of my crumbs, and lo and behold there were none of them left, and two blackbirds perched on the knobs of my railings, having knocked off the knobs of snow. With the sun just over the hill, Craig's ten-acre field was that dazzling it made me blink.

And the first thing I noticed was that there wasn't a single sign of a human footprint on it, not from this end to the other. You never laid a new tablecloth that was more spotless in all your life. 'Ring out the old!' says I.

The second thing I noticed was one of Craig's carts with Craig's man Jimmie on it, just showing up. The sky wasn't blue, it was a kind of gold, and the cart up there seemed to be coming out of that blazing sky like the chariots of old full of angels.

Jimmie my man, thinks I, that's no road for a horse and cart this day. Though if he could find his way up it every Saturday night in the year, as he did, he might well be able to find his way down it of a New Year's morning, snow or no snow.

He had Craig's boy with him, too, and what's more, Craig's dog. And do you think these two were on the cart or even on the road? Not them. They came running down in advance of the horse and cart, if you please, right down the middle of that white field; and up to all the pranks you can think of with that snow. The dog kept tossing it up with his muzzle and the boy kept kicking it up with his feet. And the boy kept throwing snowballs at the dog, which wasn't fair of him, for the poor beast,

to be sure, couldn't throw any back at him. And soon enough there were the boy's footprints, and even the dog's four to his two, all over the place where the old man had walked alone in the fear of the Lord.

You're a pair, you are, thinks I; as shameless a boy and as shameless a dog as ever broke into a Sabbath peace like this when their betters have gone their ways and left no traces of themselves.

It was just then when they were within a shout of me, and when the lad was gathering up the snow again, that I saw Craig's boy stand stock-still looking at something in his hands. That dog, believe me, was prancing around him and barking like mad, as dogs do when they think you're going to throw a stone or a stick for them. How my wits were working that day beats me still; but I had my third notion in twenty-four hours. I put my head out of the window and I called out at the top of my angry voice: 'That whistle doesn't belong to you, you young ruffian!'

And the whistle it was, as sure as they christened me Susan. He was a very old man and he must for once have popped it into that wrong pocket that he said had no bottom to it. Now there was that chit of a boy, paying no heed to me, blowing the snow out of its stops until all of a sudden the whistle began to pipe up of its own accord you might say. Seemingly he was not new to it but he was not good at it. I'm not for music myself much, but let it be good music, says I, if it must be. 'There's nae luck about the hoose,' if you please; that's what he was trying to get out of the thing. That's the easiest tune to play, and they all begin with it. I daresay the laddie meant no harm. But though, thinks I, as likely as not they'd never have allowed the old man to play it in the poor's-house, still it upset me that that very old

man had lost that very same whistle and that just Craig's boy had found it. Reason or not, that's what cost me my temper for a minute.

So when he came into the road, and the dog was still barking, I shouts at him: 'Don't you dare come into my garden with your noise.'

'Who's coming into your garden?' says he.

'Your noise is,' says I.

'Then shut your window,' says that boy, as bold as brass.

So I cries: 'When you come to me this day you'll get your New Year's penny and fine you know it. But only when you come civil,' I says. 'Not a minute sooner and this time not a penny more.'

With these same words (concluded Mrs. Kidd) I banged down my window; hard and angry, so that the snow fell off the frame and the poor blackies, that had nothing to do with it, went chittering up amongst the wintry trees.

## *Seductio ad Absurdum*

BY MALCOLM LOWRY

(From *Experiment*)

'**I** AIN'T telling you the word of a lie but this Yankee fellow came up to me and e sez steyard e sez fond of cigars so I sez yes I am fond of cigars — like who wouldn't be on this here fore-and-aft sea-crane. Waal e says ketch hold of these — plenty of these where they come from. And he give me a great box of cigars. Yes.'

'Yes, but that's only cigars. This bird was a journalist or something of that on a paper in Australia. He's traveling round the world for it and singing songs at the piano. He says if you talk to me —'

'Lor lumme days. *Talk* to you. Do you mean he stood you that feed just for talking to him?'

'*Certainly* he did. He kept saying, now say that again. And all the while he was writing in a little black notebook.'

'Well, what did you tell im?'

'Ave you heard about Hilliot, chaps? Andy nearly crowned im this morning with a frying pan. The seven bell dinner watch sent im up to the galley to tell him the sea-pie was lousy.'

'— guano —'

'Well, so it was, lousy.'

'— Pass —'

'I don't like im; serves im right; he's what you call a no-classer that feller.'

'Where is he now?'

'— one no trump —'



'Oh, dreaming about on the poop, he always gets up there during the lunch hour.'

'— Gang —'

'He's probably listening at the skylight to all we say.'

'Three hearts.'

'Probably —'

'Romeo: wherefore art thou Romey bloody O —'

'But I didn't know there was a seven bell dinner to-day — not on Sunday.'

'That's not your ruddy heart! It's my ruddy heart!'

'Yes. We're sailing this evening. The mate came down and served out a lot of bull about getting in more mail. So Mister Hilliot had to get a seven bell dinner in.'

'And Andy nearly crowned him for telling im it was lousy. Well let me tell you that that's the lad's job. The sailors' peggy always has orders from the bosun to complain about the food; you know, if it's rotten —'

'Yes. But the silly twirp went about it in the wrong way. You know the way he'd go up. Not going straight to the point, like. You know the way e does . . . Well, it's no business of mine sort of thing but these fellers — these *damned sailormen* say your food's rotten. No wonder that Andy got on his ear.'

'Well for heaven's sake. But Andy's all right, eh?'

'Yes, Andy's all right, fellers.'

'Guano gang —'

'Well, wot did Hilliot do?'

'Hey, you didn't shuffle up these cards right and all.'

'Damn all. He didn't do a darn thing. A good thing for Andy, I reckon, but any way Hilliot just said well, just as long as you know, Andy. And walked out.'

'Oh wot a twirp!'

'Hullo, ere's the second steward.'

'Ow go second?'

'My trick —'

'Second, while you're about it, you might give this god-awful peggy of ours a clean dishcloth. He never washes the thing' e's got: and it's about as white as a gyppo's —'

'Are you still abusing that boy? I like him for myself like. He's got pluck that Hilliot. I seen him aloft too, right on the foretopmast there, swinging on the ladder and laughing like a son of a bitch —'

'And the bosun bawling him out from below.'

'Guano —'

'Yes, Mister!'

'One club —'

'Well, what about that dishcloth, second?'

'Pass.'

'Reminds me of the story of the nigger fireman on one of Lampport and Holt's. Ah doan min dirty hands: ah doan min dirty face: but ah du like clean-*food*!'

'Ha ha ha!'

'Pass —'

'Well, well, so do we —'

'Go on and get your bloody club —'

'But Andy doesn't like im second.'

'Gang, guano —'

'No my gosh.'

'Andy crowned im this morning with a frying-pan. Or would have done if Hilliot hadn't got out of the road.'

'So I heard.'

'It was pretty good I thought. It'll teach im that not every little Christ Jesus in the temple can come running round cargo steamers.'

'My trick! —'

'Well, no. But what he done in coming to sea at all shows the right spirit —'

'My trick! —'

'He came up to the ship in a car didn't he — no — I dunno — but the Chinese storekeeper tell me.'

'Well, boys, he didn't come up to the ship in any car last night: as a matter of fact, he got on to the *wrong* ship.'

'The wrong ship. Second, how come?'

'The *Hyannis*. Sister ship to this one came in late last night. He was tight as a tick so couldn't tell the difference.'

'— *my* trick —'

'But the *Hyannis*, her foc'sle's forward ain't it? Like it should be on my ruddy boat, instead of being stuck under here like a lot of bloody ventilator covers.'

'Yes. That was the joke. He went right down aft looking for the forecastle and, of course, couldn't find it; so being very drunk he slept on the *poop*.'

'Well, wot did he do in the morning?'

'— *my* trick —'

'He just got up and walked off. Nobody said a word to him.'

'— for Jesus sake —'

'— for Jesus sake —'

'— told me so himself this morning when he came aboard. I was standing on the gangway—'

'The silly twit — eh? That's why he's on the poop now. Afraid the Captain'll tell his mamma.'

(But, tut-tut, a pipe must be filled to contemplate this scene with more penetrating intelligence, and a thick dirty hand inserted into my right dungaree pocket in search of the tobacco-pouch, the last birthday present you gave me, Janet . . . do you remember? It was in the Central Park, a year ago to-morrow, when we paused to watch the children playing on the swings, and then, 'Look, would that be any good to you, dear? Many happy returns of the day . . .' Loew's Orpheum. Ruby

fisheries. Do you remember going there to get the cod-steaks for your mother? Well, I have my pouch now, which I have drawn out, crackling and yellow, sprinkling crumbs of tobacco around me. And now I have my pipe well alight. The day? What of the day? Well, the sky has that sort of blackness which in February, in England, would presage thunder. There was wind last night; and moreover, I slept on the wrong ship. But there is a feeling of approaching disaster, of terrible storm, and my own mood, one of hilarious morbidity, conceals also just such a thing. It is useless for me to tell you of it. Instead — what shall I tell you? Of the Junk that is standing out to sea? Of the Japanese destroyer that came in this morning? Or merely of the crew, of those at any rate whom I see through the skylight. Megoff, for instance; down there, filling his pipe too, the old devil, with hasty trembling fingers. Ted, taking the scurf out of his finger-nails, hal a touch, a visible touch! Horsey: lying across the table with his face on his arm. The second steward's broad back, and the patch on his trousers . . . But the joke's on me. I have to admit that of these men who become day by day intricately and more intensely part of me I know nothing. Nothing at all! Even of Andy, who is more part of me than the rest of them, I know nothing. That awful incident in the galley, everybody is talking about it. Why do I not fight Andy, then? To know a thing is to kill it, a post-mortem process! Why won't I? Undignified? too Richard Barthelmess? . . . Perhaps, but I might lose, and I know less than nothing. But there is no reason to fight, even about last night! Bad, dreadfully bad, as that was . . . My fault. Love makes tradesmen of us all. But how can I stand for it, how can I suffer on top of last night's usurpation, when I was beaten out by that simpering chinless applesquire, this further petty insult

added, in the galley, to an injury of which he was not aware? I won't stand for it, by God. Jiminy Christmas no, as Taff would say! But perhaps Andy won't want to fight, even if he has invited it plainly enough. Then this is not heroic, and there's the humour of it. To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength, gives in his weakness, strength unto his foe, and so his follies fight against himself. Argal. Let us take refuge in the sailor's coil, contemplate a world of winches as a world of machine guns: let there be a sabbath of earth-worms, a symphony of scorpions, a procession of flying grand pianos and cathedrals, and the idea, the absolute, is fly-blown. Tucket within, and a flourish of strumpets. Beware Andy! I move like a ghost towards my design, with Tarquin's ravishing strides . . . Nevertheless, I fear too greatly decisive action in an emotional crisis of this calibre; nor do I wish to admit to myself that I consider Andy sufficiently important; but this, as you say, is clearly enough a case of self-defence —)

'— one club —'

'— one heart —'

'— one diamond —'

'— one no trump —'

'Well . . . !'

'Lorlumme bloody days eh.'

'I don't care if he do, mate.'

'Lorlumme bloody days eh.'

'This first mate's a man; he's got me weighed up; like *that*.'

'— *dishcloth* —'

'— here, you're cheating! —'

'No, I'm not.'

'Yes, you are.'

'Yes, I am too.'

'He had the ace in his Shanghai jacket.'

'No, I tell you, the poor twot didn't say a thing. He just said well as long as you know, Andy.'

'All these bloody no-classers are the same.'

'You can bet your boots. We had a feller once — been in the Royal Air Force he says during the war as a capting. Capting hell. First time he goes aloft he nearly throws a fit.'

'I wonder wot made that bird Illiot come to sea; doing a good lad out of is job that's wot I say —'

'That's what Andy says.'

'That's what we all says, I reckon.'

'No. You've got the lad in wrong there. You can't get him on that at all. It's up to the man himself to get the job. If he don't, why then, I guess he don't.'

'That sucker's got influence at the office.'

'He came to the ship in a car. Do you know that?'

'Oh, watch it! Let's talk of something else.'

'— and listen here this mate, he, he, says — Air Force officer or no perishing Air Force officer you're not nut —'

'Go on, you ain't got hiccups, ave you mate?'

'Not going up to that nest again or I'll lose my bonus. So no more painting for you, Mister Officer, he says: the next job of painting you'll do will be —'

'Aw shag off second, you'll be in the boy's *bunk* next.'

'This Air Force officer I was telling you about was always falling off derricks. *Hullo Andy.*'

'*Hullo there.*'

'I ain't telling you the word of a lie but this Yankee feller come up to me and e sez steyard e says fond of cigars so I sez yes I am fond of cigars — like who wouldn't be on this fore-and-aft sea-crane. Waal he says ketch hold of these — plenty of these where they come from —'

'*Hullo Andy. Ow got?*'

'Hullo there . . . hullo second; hullo McGoff.'

'What about last night, Andy — *we* saw you.'

'Oh, you did: you may've seen me at arf past nine — but you didn't see me at arf past two this morning. Or if you did you oughtn't to have done.'

'No — and you didn't see me either at half-past two in the morning.'

'No — nor me.'

'Nor me.'

Nor my ruddy self.'

'Well, what were *you* doing, Lofty?'

'What do you think? I didn't go ashore at all. I'm a God-fearing man and I don't go running after women.'

'Aw, watch it. Well anyhow, it's Sunday to-day.'

'I don't care if he do, mate. That's wot I always says. I'm a feller like this, I don't *mind* . . . Always willing to do a good turn for anybody, that's me. I don't care if he do.'

'Russian eh?'

'Second — can we have another pack of cards — the King, Queen and Ace are all bollocksed up in this pack and you can spot em, you know.'

'A change for last night, eh? Won't your usual Jane get jealous?'

'Sure. There's a pack in the linen locker. Here are the keys.'

'A fine woman.'

'Well, before I was in the guano gang, I was only an apprentice lad for myself like, apprentice, and we was going out to Walfish Bay, the whole gang of us with a cargo of lighters in sections, although at Cape Cross they had to load from surf boats because the lighters got all broke up —'

'Six pounds a month mate, and all found.'

'Carbeerian sea, a guinea note —'

'Well, I don't care if e do mate —'

'Six months or so I suppose we was there under canvas like and I'll tell you it was a rum shop. There was one chap we had and we called him *Deaffy* —'

'Wot do you think of that for a cockroach?'

'— this is better, eh? You shuffle them —'

'— king of the steamflies, eh —'

'Everything in white, you know, lovely buildings, very nice indeed.'

'And one night this chap *Deaffy* come into wot you might call the mess-room, you know. And e sez look ere fellers come along with me there's a bloody big *barrel of wine* oooooh eh? — Just been washed up on the shore. So we got our cups and a corkscrew and followed him along — it was pitch dark outside — and we came to where the barrel was — and one chap had brought a *basin* —'

'— your deal! —'

'Can't you see the water biling I sez; and this bloody old skipper turns round to me and he says, "*Lamptrimmer*", e says, "we always speak the King's English on this ship —"

'And it wasn't wine at all but Cape Dopp, wot we call Cape Dopp — raw spirit gawdblimey. Why, do you know, we all went mad, *mad*, and they had to tie *Deaffy* up to the bullock post.'

'— two diamonds my bloody foot! —'

'— two diamonds my bloody foot! —'

'Yes. And the joke about it all was that it hadn't been washed up on the shore at all, but *Deaffy* had pinched it, see, from the stores.'

'Good god!'

'And there we all bloody were doing time and building breakwaters round the magistrate's house.'



'Fancy that now.'

'That reminds me of the time in —'

'Chameleons. Fellers used to keep em as pets and make em drunk on Cape Dopp. They were as long as that, you know. Beautiful pretty things. They used to roll about and change into all sorts of colours: it was like being at masculine and debutante, you know, and then I had a pet one and one day a silly bastard fed it on nuts and bolts. Nuts and bolts, yes. Oh, we had a rare time there, I can tell you . . . didn't wear no shoes! Oh no, no shoes, walking on the salt plain, we wore what we called veldshols. One day coming back from the West Indie fellers' tent — I'd had one or two, you know — I got lost in the salt plains all night and there were jackals and scorpions, bags of the bounders —'

'Scorpions. You ain't heard nothing yet. Let me tell you this when I was in Belawandelli, it was on a Norwegian bastard out of Trondhjem, *The Hilda* —'

'— herons, vodka distillery —'

'Your trick, Ted.'

'We had one fellow there in the guano gang, not a surf-boat man, but loading the bags. He used to work from five in the morning till about nine, he was a sneak, a proper sneak, and a religious bounder too, you know . . . and he was always going to the boss with complaints! We got no money ourselves, we used to gamble with sticks of tobacco, and you know how expensive clothes are out there — well he used to get clothes sent from home and sell to us at a much increased price like, the bounder. So one day we kidded him along that there was going to be an attack by the Vompas — a tribe — wot we call the *Vompas*, yes — they come from Vompaland, and we kidded him along and kidded him along and one night, see, he was in his tent —'

'— she's only got one titty but she's all the world to me —'

'One titty —'

'But she's all the world to me.'

'— one heart! —'

'— two diamonds! —'

'And you know how cold it is at night there and the tents were stretched tight as a drum; and there we all were outside firing off rifles into the air; and throwing haricot beans into the tent and of course he thought they were *bullets* and then we went into the tent with assegais — there were always plenty of those knocking about — and some of us pretended to be wounded and one thing and the other and there this bounder was all the time underneath the bed, praying fer Christ sake! —'

'— fer Christ sake —'

'— praying.'

'Niggers. Yes. Fuzzy wuzzy niggers there used to be there, curly-headed. Dirty? My god, I've seen them cooking the entrails of a sheep and squeezing the stuff out of them like putting your mouth under a tap and eating it, and if you asked them they say: Wo! auh. Wolla wolla! Very good! Very good!'

'— yes? —'

'— yes? —'

'But in the end Deaffy went mad with the loneliness; and it took nine or ten strong men to hold him; and he used to lie down on the ground with his eyes wide open and let the flies crawl over his eyeballs . . . yes, and one day he was in charge of a donkey waggon with guano; and the donkey died; and he lay down beside the donkey and died too; and in the morning when we found them, the jackals *had scooped them both out* —'

'Gawdblimey eh!'

'Well, talking of niggers, there was two whacking bull niggers in the miki too, last night: firemen they were, and when I told Olga—'

'No you don't say for gosh sake, Andy.'

'For gosh sake.'

ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ  
 παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,  
 τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,  
 ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρμύων.

'And do you know what she said? *He he.*'

(ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ . . . If I could shut my ears to this, and my eyes, and not have the whole sordid matter set forth in all its startling vividness; if I could drown or fly away; if I could only be walking down Plympton Street, Cambridge, Mass., again that day in late February with spring approaching and the grey birds sweeping and dipping in curves and spirals about the singing telegraph wires — or weren't there any? — and later the two Sophomores fighting outside the Waldorf. And the brown street cars Harvard — Dudley, which always darted so surprisingly from behind corners as though they had some important message to deliver! . . . This is only a nightmare, of course. I am not on a ship. I am not a seaman. The ship is not alongside the wharf in Dairen. I lie in my bed at home, a cold dry bath of sheets! Beside me, the reading lamp with the scarlet shade. For a moment, think of the book I have been reading, Kipling's *Captains Courageous*, and fall asleep, easily as a child gliding down a steep incline into slumber. I dream a dream. In this dream there is Andy — but who is Andy? — singing as he rolls aimfully down the Kuan Tsien Road; Andy fumbling with his entrance ticket to the Miki dancing saloon; Andy dancing lumberingly and posses-

sively with Olga — but who is Olga? — like a chinless orang-outang in the forest with his human captive; Andy leaving his shoes outside the door. And later, after the second bottle, shifting his shoes outside the second door. There is Andy leaning out of the window in his shirt sleeves, singing to the moon —)

'I don't care if e do mate.'

'No well, that what I sez anyhow Andy: I see a look in his eye which means trouble.'

'Trouble. Yes. It will be trouble too if I have anything to do with it. Trouble! You're right.'

'— *three* no trumps. Jesus Christ Almighty!'

'I'm damned if I see what you've got against the boy all the same.'

'Well, you'll see right enough, once the fun begins. What you do with a chap like him, stamp on his foot, and — whup! — like that. Uppercut. That's what he wants, the Glasgow punch.'

'Ah, that's a deadly one that is —'

'Shut up for Christ's sake, we're playing bridge.'

'He pinches my steam-covers too —'

'Ah, come now, what would he want to do that for anyway?'

'Gawd knows, I don't. But I saw him with my own eyes or rather, no I didn't, but the Chief Steward did, and he says that he took it to keep extra soda for scrubbing out! . . . And he pinches soft soap off me. He'd pinch the milk out of my tea, that boy, and that's the sort of thing that comes out of your public schools. Well I don't ruddy know. I don't really. Honest.'

'What Hilliot wants is a good strong woman!'

'Ha ha ha!'

'He went ashore last night.'

'Yes, and you all know what happened, den't you?'

'He went and slept on the *Hyannis*.'

'Because he couldn't find his way here.'

'— is that so? —'

'— is that so? —'

'What was the name of the place?'

'Sapporo Café and Bar. Here, I've got the card. Listen to this. Nice and clean accommodation. Quick Service. Sapporo Café and Bar, No. 157, Yamagata-Dori, Tel. No. 6705. Soft and hard drinks. Mariners are all welcome. Here is a place you must not fail to visit, everything at very moderate charges.'

'Hullo Sculls.'

'Ow go?'

'All right.'

'All right.'

'I ain't telling you the word of a lie but this Yankee fellow came up to me and e sez steyard e sez fond of cigars so I sez yes I am fond of cigars — like who wouldn't be on this here fore-and-aft dung-barge. Waal he says ketch hold of these — plenty of these where they come from. And he gave me a *great* box of cigars. Yes.'

'I had an experience like that on the *Plato* — in Manila — last voyage . . . '

'Last game —'

'Listen to this, just *listen* to this. Here you will find every comfort and equipment that is sure to please you. Here you will find also best foreign wines and liquors of well known brands only. Sold by retail or by bottle. Don't forget to drop in on your way to or from wharf. *He he*, just *listen to this little lot*. A variety of magazines and newspapers are kept in our hall for your free inspection.'

'Ha ha ha ha!'

'Hullo Lamps boy, how are yer doin?'

'Hullo Jim boy.'

'All right there Jock?'

'All right eh?'

'All right.'

'That's right.'

'Me nice girl very nice very clean very sweet very sanitary.'

(Why not, Janet? I put it to you; I mean *really* kill Andy. Who was it, the chief cook, said the other day that Andy couldn't swim? And we're going to sea to-night. That habit he has in port of sitting on the starboard rail on the poop! It will be dark before he has knocked off and washed, which makes it all the simpler. At sea, to-night perhaps. Murder at sea! A murderer in thought, a murderer in deed. Now I see it all plainly; I can do it pat. Norman, whose duty it is to arouse Andy, upon being called by the quartermaster to-morrow at four bells, slides his hand with its broken blackened nails under his slim pillow-case to bring out half a crumpled cigarette, Gold Flake, charred and uneven at the end where it has been smoked before turning in. He jumps up and sits on the edge of his bunk, the lower one, with his legs swinging and his feet poised to drop into his size seven unlaced white sand-shoes; he looks around the room, noticing particularly Ginger, the pantry boy, lying on his bunk with his mouth open and his underpants, which are all he wears at night, vibrating evenly with the thrumming of the engine. He will remark for the hundredth time the photographs on the wall. Tallulah Bankhead — or is it Bulkhead? Ginger's mother with an armful of horrible children. Joe Ward taken at the police house, Flint, with his twin brother. Monozygotic twins. Taff standing on Bull Bay sands, Amlwch, swinging a mashie-niblick. He wishes profoundly and for the hundredth-thousandth

time that he may grow that extra inch, praying softly: 'Our father, which art in heaven, may I grow another inch and become a policeman of the Lord.' He pulls his check trousers on over his sandshoes, and pays attention to his chainbreaker singlet. He brushes his hair — and oh, how yellow it is! — and cleans his teeth, spitting into a bucket. Now he is walking along the well-deck, his bucket on his arm, scarcely pausing as he spits resonantly into the scuppers; now he is hoisting himself up the galley companion-steps. He enters the galley (where a quartermaster's singlet is drying), and rakes out the fires. Four bells strike, he throws his cigarette to leeward, and goes to call Andy. The white cabin door, brass-stilled, windily creaking on the prehensile hook. Everything the same as the chief cook left it when he had turned in, according to his custom, just as eight bells-all-hands-pipe-down had finished striking. The chief cook snoring peacefully — let him lie in till a quarter off six. Andy — where is Andy? His razor strop is stirring in a breath of wind through the open port; the canary in its brightly bordered cage is already chirruping with joy, its little heart almost breaking with anxiety to see the blue sea morning. The slim parcel of blankets, embroidered with the company's crests, undisturbed. Andy! Andy! Anybody here seen Andy? Was he sleeping out on deck do you know? No, not bloody likely, too damp, not a worth-while thing to do when the tropics was lousy with malarial! Too damp, Norman, yes, that's it, too damp. No good worrying any more about Andy, think of yourself, of your mickey, take the cover off his cage as though you should hope to find Andy there, and see — how knowingly and sagaciously the pigeon eyes you! The adoring eye of God's dog. He knows. Think always of that extra inch, get the potatoes from the potato locker and proceed with your work as

scullion. For the sea is picking Andy's bones in whippers. Yes, yes, yes, sculls. Oh you who throw the peel to starboard, *acuerdate de Flebas, que una vez fué bello y robusto como tú —*)

'Hullo Joe.'

'How go?'

'Not bad.'

'Not bad.'

'How are you doing, McGoff?'

'Ah Joc, I've got a little story to tell you. Now I ain't telling you the word of a lie, mind you, but this Yankee feller, you know that chap, you was there — you saw him didn't you? — well he comes right up to me and e sez steyord fond of cigars. Straight he did. So I sez yes sir, I am right fond of cigars —'

'Skipper. Old fellow. I knew years and years ago it will be now —'

'Well, of course, it was his business to find faults. When he does that he's pleased and lights a cigar. When he ain't got no faults to find no cigars for the skipper that day, savvy. Well I reckon it's the same on this God damn dug out —'

'Plenty of these where they come from, ha ha!'

'Well, I always believes in writing, so as a chap can read because he might owe me something —'

'Ha ha ha!'

— naval relics.

Chatham —'

'Heard the bosun getting at Hilliot the first day. Well, he was only telling him what to do like —'

'— one more game, come on now, boys —'

'What's that, Andy?'

'I says, the bosun, the first day, telling Hilliot what to do. I expect this room to be speckless, e said. Well,



look at it — I bet the bilges are kept cleaner than this and e pinches enough soft soap from me to keep the whole ship clean, gawd blimey — and that ain't all. You've got my room, the carpenter's, and the lamptrimmer's rooms to do — e said — and our wash-basins to clean — and the brass to do in there as well, and everything got to be scrubbed out white every day. If you don't do it, I'll hit you till you do, you've got all the meals to get in, and you've got your washing to do as well as the washing up and you've got to keep yourself clean. It's my business to see you do that. Sailors aren't dirty. You ruddy farmers think they are. But they're not. Muck in . . . Well, look at the boy *now*, he never washes himself, this room's like a pigsty, Gawd blimey eh —'

*West Hardaway — Portland, Ore.*

*Seamen.*

*Certified for use as sailors' messroom. Tin.*

Murder, with his silent bloody feet —

'Why, here he is!'

'Hullo Lovey, what've you been doin?'

'How go, Hilliot?'

'Andy. I'm going to speak to you. Listen everybody while I speak to Andy. It's for you, too. Now then it's about time I had this out with you. I don't deny I've been listening to what you've been saying from the poop. And you can't deny that you've been doing your level best to make life a misery for me since we left home. And what's more, you've been telling a lot of damned lies about me! You say I pinch your steam-covers, and your soft soap — well, let me tell you I don't. I've never pinched anything of anybody's. You've said that I've made a mess of my job. Well, I don't think that's true — this room's not too bad. It's as good as you could make it yourself. Anyone could see that. And I'd like to know how you

make out that I'm doing another lad out of a job; God damn it man, it's surely up to the lad himself to get the job. But, wait a minute, I've got something more to say, I haven't wanted to fight before — but to be frank with you that wasn't because I'm afraid of you and your Glasgow punches — no, simply because I didn't want to hurt you . . . You weak-chinned son of a Singapore sea-lion. You cringing cowardly skulker. You've got a face just like a filthy jackal, all nose and no chin . . . What a spiteful cunning dirty wreck of the Hesperus you are! That's just it, your *face*. I've just been afraid *for* you, that's all. Why, by Christ, if you'd *got* a chin, you little bastard, I'd hit you on it.'

'Here, go easy Hilliot.'

'Why should I go easy?'

'Come on, you ship's cook, you chinless wonder, you — Put them up. Up, I say.'

*Tin.*

'Here . . . go easy, Hilliot.'

'What the hell? What've I got to go easy for?'

'Well — listen — it's like this —'

'Sit *down* Andy: don't be a bloody fool. Sit down! Sit down!'

'Like what? What's wrong with you all? You know I'm in the right.'

'Now then, Hilliot, don't you be a bloody fool either, and go shooting your face off about Andy. He's an older and better man than you.'

'Yis. He's knocked seven bells out of harder cases than you in his time!'

'Yes, go easy boy . . . We all know, you see, Andy lost his chin in the war and he's had plates in it, and all, and if you hit him on it he might croak. You mustn't talk like that. We know it's your first voyage and you

just get the same as any one of us got on his first voyage. Andy and I've been shipmates for ten years. You mustn't talk like that. Go easy, man.'

'Three times torpedoed!'

'No you mustn't talk like that sonny.'

*Tim.*

'Oh Andy!'

'— Well I'm going to work in a bathing costume and a sweat rag this afternoon.'

'Me too.'

'Where was it you bought those bloody things — Cebu?'

'Yes, that's right. Well, I dunno what sort of ship this is at all!'

'Aw she's just a laundry boat, that's what, going round picking up washing.'

'Laundry boat? Huh. She's an orange box, a balloon boat, a haystack —'

'— Mate says we're getting a lot of animals in this afternoon, elephants, tigers, and I dunno what all. I suppose that'll mean the watch on deck. I suppose that's what he meant by *more mail*, gawdblimey. I dunno when we'll be away to-night, I don't really. One of the elephants for Rome, we'll get her off at Port Said for Brindisi; oh, they've all sorts of bloody things all going to the Dublin zoo eh, and a special keeper fellow's coming on board with them, prize snakes and Java sparrows for gosh sake — I suppose to feed the snakes. I dunno what sort of ship this is at all with a lot of pouncing serpents aboard her. Well, I certainly don't know when we'll be away to-night.'

'Yes, I says, I certainly am fond of cigars.'

'— pass —'

'— pass —'

'— pass —'

‘— one spade —’

*(And Samson tol' her cut off-a ma hair  
If yo' shave ma hade  
Jes as clean as yo hair  
Ma strength-a will become-a like a natch-erl man  
For Gawd's a-gwine t'move all de troubles away  
For Gawd's a-gwine t'move all de troubles away*

# *Lonely Camp*

## *An Irish Incident*

BY H. A. MANHOOD

(From *Blackwood's Magazine*)

AT different seasons Rich and the Novice, in search of fishing-ground, had crossed many bogs and moors, but never one so large and wildly broken and fascinating as this isle of loneliness within easy cry of the five ragged saints of Aran. Empty of all human contrivance as it seemed, its naked immensity was almost frightening: come to awareness of its vastness the mind leapt from the body in hasty curiosity as if recognizing the place, roving wide in the hope of finding companion essences known before birth. It seemed unfinished, a romping-ground for mastodons which had by some strange chance escaped civilization and the intention of its Creator, and was slowly disintegrating like a leaf in winter. The car appeared to feel this too; for the engine, for no discoverable reason, suddenly choked and stopped at a point where, we gloomily thought, only wings could succour us, as if it, too, wished to revel out of time. Far from admitting its right to stop we probed and pondered, but all without effect, turning at last to refresh ourselves through the eye when anger threatened. The prospect, after a second glance, brought a strange peace of mind. Leaning together over the bonnet we ceased to fume over foolish mechanical details, pointing out curious features of the landscape. Time did not matter after all in a place untouched by Time.

The road, well made but little used, curved away from us like the centre vein of a mouldering leaf, now brinking high above one of the many lakes, now low through reefs of tumbled moorstones that were like great hounds quarrelling over a giant backbone. Lakes were on every side, some large, some small, all connected by ropy streams and rock trickles, and broken by the west wind, so that it seemed as if the silver leaves of a magic crop were flapping rhythmically in sunken acres. Bracken and cotton-grass fringed them all, flooding in green white-flecked waves to the road. Distant hills looked like brown gipsy tents; the clouds beyond the smoke of companionable fires. Not even a sheep was to be seen. The quietness was outside our knowledge, the wind only sounding at times like dancing silk as it brushed against leaf and rock and quick-laughing water.

Agreed upon the inappropriateness of all words we left the car, descending twenty yards to the verge of a splendid bean-shaped lake, Rich absently polishing the bowl of his pipe upon his lapel, gazing keenly across the water for signs of breaking fish, presently raking among stones for stranded flies upon which to base his choice of the artificial. 'I wonder,' was all he said, as he went to unstrap a rod and rummage among tackle-bags.

Ten minutes later he was stationed behind a jutting rock, magically clearing his backcast as it seemed to the recumbent Novice, his line looping and whistling in pleasant anticipation. Water rippled with a hint of music as if it lapped over the keys of a sunken harpsichord, telling of past journeys over the world, two wrens hopping from point to point like earnest interlocutors, undisturbed by our presence. The three flies were drawn delicately. The sun appeared and vanished in cloud, shone and vanished again as if someone were fishing for us with a

glowing bait. Rich grumbled a little, and paused to change a fly. Lightly he stepped to a convenient rock and cast again. At once there was a splash, a strike, and the winch seemed to sneeze. Rich chuckled softly, playing the trout like an angel, singing merrily in sheer delight, his ragged coat flapping in the wind as if it were imitating the dance of his soul. Hastily the Novice stumbled over rock and thorn and found the net, returning with all speed to the danger of his limbs. But there was no hurry. It was a matter of honour with Rich never to fumble his fish. There was a moment when they could be led easily into the net, and for that moment he always worked and waited. The trout leapt once with a last magnificent effort, wheeling deep and lunging twice before submitting to the inshore drag of the line. 'A beauty, begob!' The Novice, anxious that so fine a specimen should not be lost, uttered hasty advice and made play with the net, all of which Rich ignored. In his own time he reeled in and reached for the net. 'Thanks.' A snout appeared above water, was netted unresistingly, and the lifted fish was seen to be a brilliant fellow of perhaps a pound and a half, with small head and fat well-shaped body, an unusually fine fish for moorland water. The Novice was jubilant; the problem of lunch — always an important one in his somewhat fidgety mind — was settled. 'Well done!' He hopped about while Rich weighed the fish, echoing the figure with enthusiastic emphasis, 'Twenty-seven ounces!'

As if the catching of such a fish had excited him not at all, Rich stooped and rinsed his hands, drying them in his armpits, gazing thoughtfully at a shrimp of cloud sailing overhead as if he contemplated using it for bait. 'It seems a good place to camp,' he said. 'Plenty of water and kindling.'

'A bit bleak,' the Novice ventured, imagining midnight in such surroundings.

'Bleak! with fish like that at your front door?'

'We can't build a house of fish. . . .'

'House? What would you be doing with a house? Isn't it fishing we shall be all the time?'

'Even if it rains?'

'Of course, for isn't that the best time of all! Come now, stop biting your nails and be reasonable. If it's a house you want, isn't there the wreck of one over there for you to roost in? In any case, the car won't go. If you can manage to put it right, we'll move on a mile or so.' And Rich turned again to the lake, well knowing the Novice's utter ignorance of all things mechanical, and deeming it good for his soul to experience discomfort from time to time.

Disgruntled, the Novice sniffed and muttered mutinously, unsheathing a knife with which to clean the trout. He lifted the fish to a flat stone, but did not at once use the knife, gazing instead at the vivid reddish-brown markings and marigold-yellow belly. A beauty and withal a good fighter. It was worth while having one that size on the end of your line, even worth a little discomfort. Two days had passed since he had felt the pull of a good fish. Three times running, on nearing a particular spot where shallows gleamed yellowly, called Burke's Drift, off Innisdoorus, on Corrib, he had hooked and landed a three-pound fish. He had tried to be casual about the luck, but Rich had seen through his pretence of nonchalance: 'Let yourself go, man! There's many would be giving the very hair of their heads to be playing fish like that!' And the Novice had let himself go, swearing joyously whenever the fish leapt or dived. Tug, tug at the line, the husky laughter of the reel . . . Lord, that was



the life! 'Come on, my beauty, show your paces for the last time!' Three of them in less than an hour! Great fishing! This place promised as well. Regretfully the Novice severed the head of the trout before him, squeezing out the vein of clotted blood against the backbone with his thumbnail, washing it scrupulously, hailing Rich before returning to the car.

'Don't catch them all! I'll fix camp and give you a call when grub is ready.'

'Damn the camp! Come and fish while they are taking!'

'Presently.' Wilfully the Novice made reply, aware that he will not be happy until his house is in order. But Rich was already into a second fish and had forgotten him. Wrapping the trout in fern until he should be ready for it, the Novice climbed to the road, looking towards the wrecked cottage indicated by Rich in the hope of a level tent square.

The cottage stood among craggy rocks on a slope and was hardly distinguishable at first glance from the rocks themselves. Exploration revealed an overgrown path leading upwards from road to ruin. The path had been wide and well-trodden in its time, but now seemed ashamed and reluctant in its course. Rocks had fallen in the way, and brambles were cross-linked and menacing as barbed wire. Squeezing spines from his hands, the Novice emerged into a square and miraculously level plat, comfortably grassed and drained, overlooking the road and backed by the ruin. Evidently it had once formed the potato patch of the owner. A shabby black chicken was scratching methodically from tuft to tuft, its feathers absurdly rumpled in the wind eddying about the cottage so that it seemed to be struggling to escape the stranglehold of a monstrous worm. Perceiving the Novice it stood motionless, winking rapidly, turning with

jerky precision and vanishing into the cottage as if to inform some hidden tenant. Perched upon the shredded thatch were two grey crows sheltering behind the stumpy stone chimney. Not until the chicken had disappeared did they nod to each other and whirl upwards like flakes of ash blown from the blackened funnel which appeared to contain their nest.

The Novice, alone again, grateful for the tent square, stood and gazed sympathetically at the ruin, wondering at its history, how it had come to such miserable end. Buttoned and tenanted it would have been a snug and cheerful place, but now, with broken-hinged door, splintered windows, sunken thatch and crumbling walls, only sadness emanated from it. In shape, with bowed and shaggy roof and earlike chimney, it resembled a kneeling ass. But the soul was gone. In a corner, stitched over with bents and nettles, was a great pile of broken crocks and bottles gleaming like a city of the plains, the home of a grass snake and an enormous frog who seemed entirely unafraid of piercing his fatness upon one of the many shining splinters. Beyond, under a trembling roof, were several barrels, splayed by the falling of hoops and looking like huge blackened sunflowers.

Entering the cottage, alert for falling stones and timbers, the Novice stared thoughtfully, breathing a homely sooty smell, disturbing mice engaged among sticks and paper in the hearth, these causing a crackling and rustling that was like the first breath of fire. Funguses were sprouting from chinks in the walls and from the floor, once beaten flat but now cracked and mole-tossed. Chalked upon a flat chimney-stone were many hardly decipherable strokes as of a primitive tally, and in a cranny the lump of chalk with which they had been scored still rested in a purse of cobweb. More shards were in a corner, deliber-

ately broken it seemed as if in curiosity by some reedy-brained animal, deceived by false reflections. A high chair, curiously solid but now falling apart at the joints, stood under the window, and upon the sill was an oval mirror looking like a bright petal, together with a cracked shaving mug, 'A Present from Dublin,' a piece of soap-stone and a broken-toothed comb in which a tangle of grey hair yet remained. What had become of the old fellow who had used them all?

The Novice shrugged and shivered a little, and went out into the sunshine, carefully wedging the broken door behind him. You could not be sure what might creep out of such a place after dark. A piece of chocolate, eaten with raisins, dispelled his gloom, and he began to whistle as he presently trod a place for the tent and built a fireplace of convenient stones. Looking down across the road before returning to the car he saw Rich tight in a fish; a good fish it must be, judging by the bend of the rod and Rich's audible delight. If all the other lakes were as productive! Solemnly the Novice counted all those in sight, large and small, numbering twenty-seven. An excellent camp for a fisherman, but lonely, begob! lonely enough. What must it be like in winter with the lakes brimming one into the other and no comfort anywhere? The Novice cursed his sensibility and tried to fix his thoughts upon the trout he would presently catch to keep him company, hurrying about his preparations.

Brambles cleared and tent erected, and a fire burning with cheerful hiss and crackle, the Novice was forced to admit a certain snugness. The plat was sheltered from the north, and the view was ideal. Nothing to bar the sun the whole day long. Should it chance to storm, the tent could very well be stretched *inside* the cottage. The Novice felt almost happy. Water must be brought from

the lake, but, to balance this disadvantage, turf and kindling in great quantity were to hand. The flesh of the trout was salmon-pink, and the smell of its frying charmed the rusty black hermit-fowl from its secret niche. Affecting disinterest it spuddled busily in the trodden grass, winking shrewdly, ever drawing nearer by a tail-first method. The Novice offered an old crust in all sincerity, but the hen only clucked in derision and flapped her miserable wings, looking like an old dame shaking her dress into a new primness after insult. 'To the devil with you, then, to be refusing an honest gift!' And the Novice hurled the crust, striking the bird fairly. With a shrill squawk it hopped two feet into the air, but not in panic, for it descended squarely, snatched the bread and scuttled into cover with long, wiry strides.

Laughing, the Novice called Rich to the meal, his shout flapping across the waste like a dove from the ark. Rich, intent upon yet another fish, responded shortly. The fish landed to his satisfaction, good-humour returned, and he mounted to the road with sprightly step, finding the path to the camp, holding his fish-weighted net high above the tangled undergrowth. The Novice snatched the pan from under his pilfering fingers just in time, pretending indignation.

'Is that the action of a gentleman? Kindly wait until everyone is seated!'

For answer Rich flipped a magnificent trout across. 'Ransom for a meal,' he pleaded, and, while the Novice stooped to admire, he fell upon the pan, briskly dividing the fish, slicing bread in a twinkling, eating like one awakened from hibernation. 'Good fish,' he mumbled.

'Then you must be going by appearances alone, for you're not giving yourself time to taste it! You remind me of a pigeon bolting acorns!'

'And thee remind me of an angel in torment or an old woman whose cow has run dry, or, again, of a mouldy chapman who cannot sell his tracts and who sings out of spite to the accompaniment of his own rattling teeth, howling like a wolf in the wilderness because his grapes are frost-bitten. . . .'

The Novice, well acquainted with the endlessness of Rich's invention, cried mournfully, '*Peccavi*!' and Rich grinned over a loaded fork: '*Peccavi* it is, and now sit ye down and eat, for time runs and the fishing is good. Seven pounds of trout in an hour. At this pace we shall have plenty to salt down against a time of famine. A good camp, commissar! Rum-looking ruin that, and the chicken, is it on the staff? What do you call it?'

'Daisy Jane is her name,' the Novice retorted. A pointed introduction followed, and then peace was declared. We ate and rejoiced. Trout was followed by rice boiled in milk and treacle to a kind of pudding. Some precious lettuce leaves were shared (lettuces are as rare as pickled oranges among the peasant Irish), and eaten with almond-firm cheese of cottage make. Rich offered the caraway seeds picked from his bread (one Irish hostess insists upon baking quantities of amply-seeded bread for us when we travel, much to Rich's disgust, for he numbers caraway seeds with midges among the worst accidents of nature) to Daisy Jane, but, after carrying one away for close inspection, she rejected it, blinking and cackling her disgust, mooching away to peck and scratch over an ancient dunghill. First hunger satisfied, Rich questions her presence. 'Sensible bird, that. Odd that she should have been left behind. A peasant usually knows his fowls better than his beads. They must have left in a hurry . . .' And Rich remembered other cottages blackened and open to the wind

and the rain. 'And only a fowl remains in constant mourning,' he mused, and, compassionately, he flung an abundance of bread to Daisy Jane — the Novice's bread. The Novice uttered a remonstrance, Daisy Jane bolted with the bread held securely in her tarnished beak, and Rich munched complacently at an apple. 'Hush,' he said, 'else 'tis few fish we shall be catching this afternoon with your bull-voice warning them all. . . .'

'Snooks!' retorted the Novice crisply, and stretched himself to sleep. The fish might wait until body and mind were in agreement. Pleasant to feel the sun soaking through the body, ripening it, like an apple, born intolerably sour but waking to a mellow sweetness. Apples jumping over a stile, twenty, thirty, forty . . . Daisy Jane was the shepherd. For counting beads she used a string of caraway seeds.

Hours later the Novice awoke to a violent blow upon the temple. A first thought was that an enormous wasp had driven its sting home with a hammer. He sat up, striking blindly, eyes white with the sun. A triumphant squawk proved the culprit. Daisy Jane had snapped a fly from his dreaming brow. Confound her! And yet, after all, her intentions might have been good. Was it better to be pecked than stung?

The Novice lay for a while in calm enjoyment of the sky. The sun was at half-mast, and as yet he had caught no fish. Why bother? Guiltily he remembered the terms of his novitiate and moved reluctantly to his feet. The prospect of casting a fly for several hours did not thrill him. Yet it would be pleasant to feel a taut line again, to land a mettlesome fish. Lazily he straightened camp — a longish job, for tidiness is his weakness — turning over the problem in his mind. Worm-fishing was the ideal,

but it must be done without Rich's knowledge, for in his eyes it was an unpardonable sin to fish so clumsily when flies could be used. With a very pleasant sense of wrongdoing the Novice dibbed for worms in the ancient dung-hill, securing a score or more of rank and rosy-banded brandlings. Happily he filled a tin with moss and introduced the worms. Next a rod, long and stout, a thick line, for he wanted to hold whatever he hooked, and a beautiful green float that brought to mind Newton and the apple that fell. Two thick-gutted hooks of a button-hook strength were tucked inside the only appropriate book available — a moth-spotted *Selborne*, stolen from an hotel where it had been hung for shaving-paper — and the Novice strolled amiably to the road, along which no one had yet walked or wheeled or seemed likely to do so. Idly, in passing, he pressed the self-starter of the car and the engine coughed and fired, humming as if it were weary of loneliness and regretted its previous failure. But the Novice was not tempted. There was a certain subtle charm about the place, and, after all,<sup>8</sup> it was pleasant to loiter in utter solitude in a mechanistic age, to sprawl awhile among the roots of the world. Stepping easy he descended to the lake, choosing a leeward nook with care, cushioning himself luxuriously.

Ten minutes were spent in assembling rod and line and baiting the hook with an enormous bunch of worms, the entire collection, for he did not want to be disturbed even by a rank smell. Guessing at the depth of the lake the green float was adjusted and, at the third attempt, flung far out. Propping the rod against a convenient rock, the Novice settled himself comfortably, lighting a pipe and removing his shoes for greater ease. Fishing, taken in well-considered doses, had its good points. The sun, though riding fast, was yet hot. At times a

sweet evening coolness drifted over the lake, causing leaves to twitch and rustle in merry harmony. Vivid green reeds at the water's edge crossed each other like swords startled into protective movement. Distant lily pads lifting in the breeze looked like the heads of eager swimmers. Dragon-flies shuttled to and fro with scorching suddenness, weaving the fabric of rainbows. A swan beat heavily overhead, silver against the blueness, seeming to pack the air into a path behind it as if preparing a way for some lord of heaven. Long after it had passed the whistling flap of its wings sounded like the gasping of the imagined fleet of swimmers. Distant ridges were like leaping flames strangely, fantastically frozen into stone. Rocks at the feet of the Novice seemed to bear the imprint of great hands. Creation had only just begun; the world was yet soft, new to the sun. The breeze might have been the brushing of fingers impatient with results. The Novice forgot his pipe, breathing softly, very close to the mystery of being. If he could only sink deep enough into the harmony the essential universe would be revealed. He would need to question no more, but would accept all things as a gift under the seal of a true philosophy. . . .

He dozed, waking at times to gaze affectionately at the gently nodding float. That, too, seemed to share his knowledge. Drowsily he imagined the bunch of worms swaying deep down like a grotesque chandelier, bait for a giant. There was no hurry. This was fishing according to the poets — did poets fish? No torn muscles or temper, no tangled casts or broken oars. He sighed in his contentment and opened the *Selborne*, reading sympathetically.

'Now a shrew-ash is an ash whose twigs or branches, when gently applied to the limbs of cattle, will immediately relieve the pains which a beast suffers from the running of a shrew-mouse over the part affected, for it is supposed



that a shrew-mouse is of so baneful and deleterious a nature that wherever it creeps over a beast, be it horse, cow or sheep, the suffering animal is afflicted with cruel anguish and threatened with the loss of the use of the limb. A shrew-ash was made thus: into the body of the tree a deep hole was bored with an auger, and a poor devoted shrew-mouse was thrust in alive and plugged in. . . .

The Novice awakened to a movement at his feet, and a mouse, not a shrew, however, peered up at him with shining eyes as if it wished to communicate knowledge, clock-working away after a moment. Dainty creatures. The Novice looked farther, blinking against the reddening sun, searching for the green float. Immediately excited, for the float was gone, he dropped the book and dived for the rod, heedless of stones under his stockinged feet. He stared disbelievingly, and, even as he did so, the line straightened and the rod began to slide. 'No, you don't!' he muttered, and twitched up the rod, striking hard. But there was no sensational response. The rod bent and the winch rasped a little, but there was hardly a move under water. The Novice began to hop. He struck again, just for luck, and congratulated himself on the stoutness of rod and line.

'We'll have a game with you, my lad. Don't think you can get away as easily as that. Do you know the breaking strain of this line? No? Well, neither do I, but it's certainly beyond *your* weight. Come up! What, you won't? Well, well, we'll see. Now then! Well done! A splendid imitation of a waterlogged suit-case! *But*, it won't work with me! Why, I've landed fish that could swallow the like of you in a gulp. Straining at a gnat — I know. Pretending you are twice two are nine. Want me to get excited, bolt for help, and then off you go with

the rod. I know your kind, worse than an umbrella thief! You might just as well come quietly before you break a blood-vessel. No? Well, there's no hurry. Just take your time, but remember, *this* side out, and God help you if you try to foul the line. . . .'

For perhaps ten minutes the Novice harangued his catch, straining at the line from all possible angles but without winning more than a few inches. 'Damned queer!' he finally ejaculated, and set to work in earnest, winding determinedly. A steady strain would hurt neither rod nor line. Now, at last, there was movement under water, a strong jerking remindful of an unbroken colt in harness. The Novice became aware of a trembling in his knees. Here was certainly something out of the ordinary. He recalled tales of enormous pike and trout, fish that had worn whole collections of hooks and spinners in their jaws much as a man might wear trinkets on his watch-chain. Sweating and muttering he tugged and wound steadily, peering down into the lake for a glimpse of this surly crab, careless of the fact that he was paddling in his stockings. Its movement was unlike that of any fish known to him, and he remembered yet another tale of some monstrous fresh-water mussels which had closed upon the feet of two unwary bathers and held them against all their struggles until they drowned. Wildly improbable, but still, wasn't *anything* possible in such a desolate place as this? Might not the lake be swarming with uncouth creatures surviving from the darkest of the ages?

Ridiculous! He mocked himself and took firmer grip upon the rod. Another two feet of line was gained, and then with electric suddenness the strain relaxed and there was a mighty churning, an ugly snake-head lashing above water, scattering spray far and wide, disappearing again like a steel spring. An eel!

The Novice was profoundly disappointed. A mere eel, when he had hoped for so much. Contemptuous now of his catch he hauled resolutely, and the eel was drawn close, threshing madly with its pouchy head, its white belly flashing. It looked like a tentacle of a large octopus, the more so because it had coiled itself about a green-black boulder in desperate attempt to anchor itself against capture. 'A low trick, my beauty,' the Novice grunted, and considered ways and means of killing the brute. Rather thicker than his wrist it would be distinctly awkward to hold. The best plan would be to drag it as far from the lake as possible and slice off its head. He wondered what the 'Correct Fisherman' would advise under such circumstances. A pair of blacksmith's tongs would be most useful.

Now the leaden head with its whity pouting lips was close enough to cause uncomfortable tremors in the Novice. It was both ugly and vicious. The eel must be ten pounds in weight. 'Come up, you apostrophe!' The Novice dragged at the line, and the eel was drawn over rocks, tail still knotted about the greeny boulder. Boulder? The Novice almost dropped the line in his astonishment. The greenish shape was bumping resoundingly upon the stones. Crusted and dented, it was yet recognizable as a large metal vessel with wormy tubing at the neck. A strange catch. Stumbling and fuming the Novice dragged the eel many yards from the brink and fumbled for his knife. Immediately the eel snarled itself in the line, relinquishing its hold upon the metal globe. The Novice trod with his stockinged foot upon it, and the eel writhed in tight, slimy loops about his leg. After several messy attempts to clutch the lunging head he knelt awkwardly and sawed through the squirming flesh an inch from his foot. Blood was splashed as the two halves knotted

themselves frenziedly. Death came slowly to the severed flesh, the ugly head burying itself under stones in last conscious attempt at escape, the Novice watching, fascinated and sickened now that it was all over.

A long time after, as it seemed, he joined the slimy lengths, measuring clumsily — eight times the length of his foot. He stood in uneasy thought. Should he claim the capture before Rich, the artist, or fling the horrible fragments far out into the lake and say naught? He could not decide, feeling, now that the sickness had passed, a certain base pride in having conquered such a terror. Gloomily he examined the metal globe, scratching away the grime and crusted weed, surprised to discover the reddish glow of copper. Certainly a find. The globe reminded him of chemistry experiments under the stairs. The worm at the top must have attracted the eel; perhaps it had fallen in love with it as a man might fall in love with a graven likeness. How did an eel's mind work? Absorbed in the thought, he almost collapsed upon the pot as he heard footsteps and a voice.

'Well, I'm damned!' Rich stood and stared, toeing the eel with a grimace of disgust. 'Why must you be catching such rubbish when there are good trout aching for the fly?' He exhibited the five excellent fish in his net to the silent Novice. 'Well, well, 'tis a queer taste you have, though I'm not blaming you. I can do with some of the skin for dressing artificial minnows. We might even try jellied eel for supper.' He eyed the crestfallen Novice, grinning suddenly. 'Cheer up, you old sock-eye! I can remember the time when I should have been strutting proud to catch such a beast. It's against the grain to congratulate you, as you'll agree when you are out of your apprenticeship. 'Tis fishing of a sort, but in the same class as shooting a roosting pheasant. A good

catch, though.' He saw the globe. 'Did you disturb him at tea?'

Penitently the Novice gave an account of the capture.

'The eel was wrapped round it? That's a good one, my son, but who's going to believe it? Seriously? Humph!' Rich took the globe into his own hands. 'A nice piece. You know what it is? A pot-still and solid copper at that. A lively history it's got, I'll bet. The eel must have known its value and worn it as a signet ring. You might write an account for the papers . . . What's that? . . . A sense of dignity prevents you; the ethics of literature might be compared with those of fishing! All right, a fair knock.' Chuckling, Rich picked up a length of eel and climbed to the road, leaving the Novice to follow with globe and tail.

All the beauty of evening was about us. The moor seemed to be dreaming, sunk in a magnificent calmness. A clean-cut block of cloud was in the western sky, a marble jetty towards which the sun was riding under full sail. Faint green and purple tints were seeping into the blueness. A dolphin grinned near the sun and dissolved into a feather of spray. The many lakes were darkening, and it was as if eyes were closing in sleep under thick lashes of reeds. A wild duck called and was quiet, reassured by the colour of the sky, convinced that no evil could walk where that colour was.

The road was empty. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. We had come to value the loneliness, warming to each other. The camp was as the Novice had left it except that Daisy Jane was roosting contentedly in a box of potatoes, perhaps mistaking the potatoes for eggs, much as a lonely man might deliberately delude himself that water was wine. She seemed to have accepted us as friends for, beyond a greeting toss of the head, she

made no move. The camp, too, seemed to welcome us, the tent-flaps nodding and the banked turf glowing with sudden spirit. Jocular argument followed as to who should prepare supper, and with the air of a martyr Rich skinned the detested eel and fried slices in butter, often transferring tasty fragments to his mouth in the process. Whistling softly, the Novice sat cross-legged and scraped and burnished the pot-still into a state of splendour. The smell of frying spread in the quiet air, and we were pleased to imagine that the sun looked round regretfully before vanishing in cloud. Crickets began a cheerful conversation in the surrounding undergrowth, and it was as if they were sharpening many knives preparatory to an attack upon the frying-pan. The two grey crows returned to the ruined cottage and shuffled themselves into the chimney. Far away an ass brayed, the sound leaping across the lakes until at last it fell short and was drowned.

Supper eaten amid mutual congratulations on the savouriness of the dish, we stretched comfortably, smoking in silence, watching the last light draining from the sky. Turf was piled upon the fire, and, as darkness settled, the mound was parted, a glowing tide breaking over us. We felt like kings. Stars acknowledged us in their various ways. The tent might have been a palace of marble instead of a flimsy stretch of canvas. We felt substantial, lords of ourselves and indebted to none, contented with life and begging no single gift. Daisy Jane slept among the potatoes. The pot-still shone in the shadow like a negroid elf to whom we need only call for classic entertainment. We talked of home and of friends over a jug of mulled ale. 'I remember,' said Rich, then paused, for the ass had brayed again, startlingly near. We listened, and presently we heard the clatter of hooves

upon stones and a fat little voice singing away as if to inspire courage in a faint heart.

'The first traveller beside ourselves that the road has seen to-day.'

The Novice held up a hand for silence, wondering whether the stranger would pass in ignorance of our presence. We disentangled the words of the song and were amused, imagining a lover:

'O I'm not meself at all, Molly dear, Molly dear,

I'm not meself at all.

Nothing carin', nothing knowin', 'tis after you I'm going,  
Faith, your shadow 'tis I'm growing, Molly dear,

And I'm not meself at all!

The song ended suddenly, and we heard a husky exclamation: 'Jesus and Mary!' The ass had baulked at the car. The car was examined to an accompaniment of astonished grunts, and then the stranger saw the glow of the camp fire and sought to whip the ass onwards in desperate haste. 'Holy Mother! Trot, damn ye, trot!' We heard the thumping of a fist and a groan. 'Eigh, wisha, 'tis damned I am, and no fault of my own!'

Laughingly Rich called through the darkness, 'Welcome to the fire.'

'Not I, begob!' an agitated voice answered him.

'Why not? 'Tis Englishmen we are, ugly but honest, camping and fishing in this blessed country.'

'Englishmen?'

We could feel curiosity drifting upwards. 'To be sure, and there's beer in the pot to be warming yourself.'

'Beer?' Silence for a moment while the stranger buried his fears, and then we heard him leading the ass up the path to the camp, grunting and creaking as if rusty-

jointed, following the path in the darkness as one who knew it very well. The ass stumbled once, but was not rebuked; then two heads appeared, and not for a moment could we tell which belonged to the ass, and which to the man, so alike were they in the dimness.

'Welcome. Come and sit.' Rich made a comfortable place, and refilled the jug nested in the ashes.

The stranger peered cautiously, breathing heavily (for he was fat), shuffling his flat feet, turning the ass adrift before advancing slowly.

'Englishmen, is it?'

'To be sure, but the beer is Irish.'

The stranger laughed uneasily, holding his belly, introducing himself as one come before magistrates. 'I'm called Duffy — Ulick Duffy.'

'A good name.' Rich placed a mug in his fat reluctant hands. 'Here's health.'

Duffy looked up and down and from side to side, and sipped as if expecting to taste brimstone, but, finding the liquor to his taste, he drank deeply, gulpingly, grinning shyly as he lowered the mug. 'Duffy is the name,' he said, as if that would explain everything. "'Tis welcome ye are on my land.'

'Your land?'

'E'yes! The cottage above do belong to me, though there's no pleasure in the owning of it, such a miserable old shell as it is, and me without a penny or wish to be squaring it up.'

With a melancholy sighing he came closer, and we saw him clearly. Very short and stout he was, with a long unshaven horse-face and large watery eyes, under the weight of which his absurd nose seemed to totter and tremble constantly. A cottony moustache drooped over his thick pursed lips like dead grass over a mush-



room. Stringy hair fringed his forehead beneath the broken peak of a cap; the cap might have been an old nest which he had clapped upon his head for warmth. His rusty frieze jacket and trousers were loose upon him, suggesting that he had once been even larger than he now was. What sorrow had thinned him? A thick grey flannel shirt was bunched over his chest, and by its constant movement might have concealed a cat and kittens. The side pockets of his jacket were each weighed with a bottle, these giving him an architectural balance.

Emptying his mug with a thirsty sucking, he squeezed moisture from his moustache with thumb and forefinger and tapped the bottles in his pockets. "Tis like finding a lamb out of season to be drinking with ye. 'Twas to the village I was traipsing to be filling the two of them.'

He sighed again, and the fire seemed to glow brighter under the breath of him. 'Yis, yis. Wance it wasn't so far by half and the liquor perfect.' He stopped as if he had said too much, coughed lamely and lifted his great feet in turn as if to make sure that he was not treading upon flesh, lowering himself awkwardly to his heels, subsiding like a punctured balloon, rocking a little before tipping back his cap and cupping his chin in his fist. "Tis a weakness of mine,' he said, and stared bemusedly into the fire, astonishingly like a huge brooding toad, starting violently as Rich offered tobacco. 'Thank ye.' Shrugging away the thoughts that troubled him, he stared round for material for conversation, sighting after a moment the trout laid upon a stone for salting. 'Good fish,' he said; 'a good catch.'

'But we made a better,' Rich assured him, and pointed to the eel and the copper pot-still beyond.

Duffy was not at all interested in the eel, but stared

unbelievably at the still. Rising, he approached and touched it gingerly. 'Holy Mother!' he muttered, 'tis the same!' Turning, he tapped Rich excitedly, 'Will ye sell it?'

'Sell such a treasure!' Rich simulated surprise at such a request, hoping for talk.

But Duffy did not talk at once. 'I'm not blaming ye,' he said miserably, and settled again upon his heels close to the pot, hardly listening to the Novice's tale of the finding of it. 'In the lake was it?' he said at last and nodded to himself, staring fixedly, fingers idly, wastefully shredding the tobacco in his palm. Anxious to dispel such tragic sadness, the Novice filled his mug again and forced it upon him. The brooding Duffy turned and sniffed and stuffed tobacco into his cheek to cover his embarrassment, accepting the mug gratefully, balancing it lovingly in his hands, blinking away the moisture in his eyes. 'Ye must be excusing me,' he said slowly, 'but I never thought to be seeing that pot again or to be reminded of herself whose wealth it was.'

Assured of a tale, the Novice questioned sympathetically, and Duffy sighed and cursed his ass for an impatient movement. 'I'll be telling ye both for your kindness,' he said. "'Twas that poor skeleton of a cottage above that was the cause of it all. To look at it now in its misery ye'd not be believing that no more than twenty months ago 'twas the house of as sweet a creature as Himself ever blessed with wisdom. Heaven was inside for a few of us hereabouts. 'Tis so, 'tis so, und the saints themselves would be persuading ye as well. 'Twas like this. One day a full little jug of a woman sitting atop as neat an ass as ever I've seen stopped me in the marketing and offers a scribble she'd made with her own quick hands. 'Twas dumb she was, ye see, and she wrote asking me

pleasure on this very cottage and to be naming a rent that wouldn't sink a poor lonely woman. 'Twas a lousy mushroom of a place, and it dead and crumbling, and I couldn't be asking more than a breadth of money, and when she heard me with her head tucked on one side she wrote that she'd gladly pile the stones again and make all snug without cost to meself, and for rent she'd barber the head of me as often as the wish was there. Jokey-like we fixed it up, and off she goes and meself blessing the luck from tip to toe, for wasn't she a true creature of the Little Black Rose and I knowing no more of her than her name. But 'twas enough. Ye'd only to look at Bridie Doyle to be feeling the great quality of her. A small tidy little body she was, sweet as an apple and merry in her soul, though the tongue of her was doomed to silence. Out of nowhere she came with her pots and knowledge, and 'twas the gracious will of Himself that she chose the cottage above and meself for landlord.

'Most of a week I gave her to be shaking down, and me thinking of this barbering trick all the time, and the hair of me sprouting like summer thorns in anticipation. I'd doubts in plenty, mind ye. I'd never heard of a woman creature handling a razor before, and I'd be thinking 'twas a jest and she not likely to trim me at all. It didn't seem natural. And then I'd be remembering the true sweetness of her and be telling meself to go and find out.

'Worn thin with dreaming I swings along casual-like one morning just to be judging the repair. A handsome job she'd made of it, and not a stone uncomfortable any more and herself not shy at all of showing me high and low. "A grand job ye've made of it," says I, and "I'm glad ye like it," she scribbles on her slate. I caught her smiling at the scruff of me, and in a minute she writes

some more. "Would it be the first week's rent ye've come for?" "It would," says I, bold as I could, and she laughs again, and I followed her inside, and she dusts a hellish great barbering chair under the window with the slack of her apron and shakes out a towel and fills a crock with the hottest of water, and meself praying strongly that she'd a steady hand, and it no jest at all. Doubtless so, 'twas comforting to be sitting there. Snug as your heart it was inside; floor swept, pans in their places, cat on the hearth, holy lamp burning and a fine flank of bacon hanging from a beam; 'twas as if the place had been blessed without stint. I tells her so, and she looks up from stropping a razor with a gay breath of a smile that would have pleased a stone. "Sit ye down," she writes, and I do, and she tucks the towel under me collar and it smelling of sweet soap and sunshine so that ye'd know she was one of the cleanest, truest bodies ye'd be liable to find in the world's market. . . .

'Next the soap, and that she spreads over the coarse face of me with as tender a hand as a painter of holiness, sparing no pains at all to soften the scrub. I was nervous of the razor in my newness to her gift, but she takes no offence, only strokes away the beard as lightly as if 'twere down and not bristles stout enough to be tearing the fine skin of herself. "Is it anything else ye would be needing?" she writes when my face was clean, and I'd spent the wonder that was in me for the smoothness of the skin. "Have ye scissors?" I asks, and she nods and begins the trimming of me hair as if she loved it and wouldn't be causing a single hair pain by an untidy snip. In no time at all 'twas done and the litter brushed away, and she holding a bit of mirror just so. Begob and 'twas like looking at meself backwards; I mean 'twas as if she'd trimmed away a dozen years. "Och, duar-na-

Criosd! 'Twas never better donel!" I cried, and strained myself to be thinking of something else to be employing her nimble hands and holding the smile of herself upon a lonely man. But nothing else could I think of, and I feel for me pipe and begs a flame, offering tobacco with regret that the brand was common. Just as if 'twas yourself she fills a little black devil of a pipe and puffs right happily, and not a word of me going. Pleasantly we sat, and 'twas like heaven to me whose hearth is empty. I was aching to talk, but every word in me was on its knees in adoration and wouldn't be stepping outside at all. The cat yawned and the kettle sang like an angel, and presently Bridie taps her pipe and measures me well, bustling away out of the house, hopping back again with a little stone bottle black with crumbs of earth. Briskly she pours and holds the cup for me to be drinking, watching with the smiling face of her tucked on one side. I peeped and smelt and sipped, and the room began to glow and the earth to slip. Begob, and 'twas true milk of the sun she was feeding me . . . poteen was a coarse word for it. 'Twas the golden colour of water in stony shallows, and the taste was like full summer with a breath of peat. I felt it colouring meself all over, and thoughts began to splash like fish into a better world. I tried to tell her the magic that was in it, but she knew, for hadn't she made it out of her patience and knowledge. Another sip and I must be going while a scrap of sense remained, else I should be offending her with hands and mouth and spoiling heaven. Twice I thanked her and blessed her too, and promised her a parcel of turf, and she wrote that she'd be glad to see me whenever the face of me was uneasy and such of my friends who wouldn't be talking wild of her gifts. . . .'

Duffy sighed deeply, gazing mournfully into the fire,

hands swinging like fat hanged midgets. 'That was the first time. In a week the cottage was a regular port of call for just a few of us. O'Shea would be coming with groceries. Jeff Quirk would be collecting her eggs for market. Patrick Nolan would be bringing her a cut of meat, and Michael O'Keefe would call with a slice of salmon or a string of trout that he'd charmed from the river. Fergus Tobin would be buying her fleeces and bringing her woollens and lengths of frieze to be wearing, and Father Scanlon himself would be calling often to bless Bridie in her affliction and beg her advice on a sick cow or stony hen. Between us all we kept her going, just as ye'd keep a saint in nourishment out of love of his knowledge. Not a smell of silver would Bridie be taking for barbering or liquor. Generous as a field of flowers she was, happy in friendship and needing nothing, and 'twas blessed paradise for us to be feeling her hands and tasting her brew. If all Ireland could have drunk from the same cup there'd have been universal peace so that all other nations of the world would have been puzzled and wondering when Himself had arrived. 'Twas perfection that visiting, and we wouldn't have sold the right for a bull of gold. The sergeant himself was bothered at such contentedness where he'd been used to strife, and he came sniffing. But a shave was all he got, and that not a good one, for Bridie blunted the razor for him. Bothered he was and humbled too, after Father Scanlon talked to him on the everlasting sweetness of humanity. If he'd been a true turf-born and wise in his soul, we'd have given him the secret, but 'twas from Dublin he came, and him with a face like a padlock and no understanding in him at all. Not a man to trust with anything precious . . . but there, misery is mine, for how should I be judging another when 'twas meself

was the cause of calamity, God's curse on the luck that gave me tongue!

Duffy spat into the fire, and by his grimness it might have been his unworthy soul that fell hissing among the bright turves. He pulled his cap low, perhaps that we should not see his unhappy eyes. 'Eight bright months, he went on, 'and meself the happiest of men, for Bridie had made a promise. At the time, ye see, she was working for perfection in the brew, striving for a liquor that would bring heaven to earth in all its richness, and dear peace to men. 'Twas the soul she was after finding, and when she had it safe her work would be done and she free to be marrying Ulick Duffy. Desperate close I watched the processes. Often and often I'd sit while Bridie slaved at her pots and tubes just back of the cottage, and the sweet fumes would be washing over me and this very head filling with comfortable thoughts that I'd be spilling to Bridie so that she'd smile. I'd be telling her that no man could be wishful of a purer spirit or finer visions than the like of it did rouse in him, but she'd wave me quiet with a sober look on the darling face of her like ye'd be meeting in pictures of the blessed saints. And I'd be quiet against me will, for wasn't I sharing a mystery that would delight Himself with its beauty. Impatient as any gossoon I'd be, but Bridie was steady on her way as the west wind and wouldn't be hurried. "'Twill come," she'd scribble on her slate, and come it did, though now I'm wishing that the secret had been deeper than the well of Cluanmeala.

"'Twas late one night when the vapour began to please her, and she begging me to stay and tend the fire and taste her success. Excited she was but calm with it, if ye understand me. She'd be watching the blessed drops sliding from the tube, and spreading pots to be blending

the stuff, and meself in a glad trance and praying for the perfection that would bring a marriage. We weren't noticing the end of night and the crack of dawn at all, for Bridie was sure she'd won the secret. Presently she gives me a sip of the beoir, smiling with the dear head of her tucked on one side. I drank, and all the coarseness I'd ever known seemed to drop from me like a parcel of old leaves from a tree. 'Twas like being born again into a world all soft and comfortable and lit with rare beauty. Not a sharp edge anywhere, and all things smiling. I could have told ye what Himself was thinking. I could see meself running with the legs of the wind and milking the cows of heaven for the delight of the world. I felt strong as fire and clean as the roof of the sky.

'I wanted to take Bridie to the priest that very minute, but her work wasn't finished and she couldn't be sparing the time till she'd fixed her quantities. So happy I was I could sit still no more than a bog-fly. I begged another sip, and off I trots to be telling friends of the goodness that was being born. The village was quiet as if it had been new-laid. 'Twas at Mass they all were, and meself thinking what a grand opportunity to be spreading the new faith. Into the house I rollicks with a song and a shout. Father Scanlon was preaching a bit. I calls to him to prepare for a wedding, and the whole village staring like a nightmare, and the sergeant himself scratching about like a hound after rottenness. O'Keefe takes hold of me, and Fergus Tobin after him, but I shook them away and began telling them all of the saint that was in our midst. Ye see, I was thinking they were all empty of meanness as meself and would be down on their knees with thanks. I didn't notice the sergeant collecting his men or Father Scanlon talking to Jeff Quirk and the rest. I hadn't begun to talk before the good Father



bundled me away and poured cold water into me ears. "God forgive ye," he said kindly, and says it yet, he does, and me hardly understanding what a miserable bodach I was.

"Twas a race between the sergeant and Quirk, but Quirk won, and Bridie was rushed to Cobh and away on a steamer going foreign. Mad as a bull the sergeant was, and 'twas himself smashed the cottage and everything in it and none of us daring to hinder him.'

Duffy shook himself as if touched by a chill wind. The fire had crumbled, and it seemed that the red ruin reminded him forcibly of the death of happiness. Quietly Rich found other turves, and rolled the pot, still close.

'Will you be needing a string to carry it away?' he asked.

Duffy did not at once understand that the globe was a gift. He patted it wistfully as if it were a fat little animal, slowly realizing our intention. 'Not I,' he said gratefully at last. 'It will travel comfortably in me arms. I'm thanking ye. 'Twill be a great consolation to be possessing it. Bridie herself would be thanking ye too.'

He relapsed into misery, and Rich touched him gently.

'Cheer up, man. Maybe there's hope for you yet.'

'Not a hope,' said Duffy sadly; 'for on the ship she met a doctor fellow who loosened her tongue so that she spoke again after thirty years, and in gratitude she married him, and him the brother of a magistrate and a priest who'd not be letting her tamper with the keys of heaven. Bad cess to 'em all and to meself for me weakness.'

There seemed nothing left to say in the face of such melancholy, but we found words of a sort for which Duffy thanked us. For a little while we sat on in silence, and then

Duffy moved with apology after a glance at the stars. Hugging the still, he called the ass from the shadows: 'Here, Bright!' His long horse-face twitched as he bade us good night. We shook his cold limp hand. The Novice would have offered him whisky, but Rich in his wisdom restrained him. 'He'd not be relishing it with the memory of that other stuff in mind.' We watched him go, and hoped that we would meet again. Duffy hoped so too, but without much conviction; it was as if he had stepped from another world to tell the tale and now was returning. We heard him gain the road, mount the ass gaspingly, and urge it homewards in a voice curiously thin and gentle. Hooves clattered, and presently the sound died, and we were alone again save for a ghost that moved about the wrecked cottage.

We said but little as we prepared for bed, turning over the tale in our minds. Comfortably settled in our sleeping bags, back to back for protection against the loneliness outside, we sighed and shared an apple, having forgotten to brush our teeth.

'A good day,' said the practical Rich, remembering the trout listed in his diary.

The Novice pondered. 'If only we could find a gallon or so of that poteen.'

'Why?' demanded Rich.

'So that I could drink and write the tale as it was told.'

'Try China tea with lemon.'

The Novice grunted and dropped his apple core into Rich's boot. 'May you marry the daughter of a breeder of goldfish.'

'And thee the widow of Old Moore!'

'Idiot!'

Backs were bumped together. We sighed and wriggled ourselves towards sleep. The Novice wanted to tell Rich

that the proper name Brighit or Bride signified a fiery dart, and was the name of the goddess of poetry in the pagan days of Ireland. But Rich was already asleep. The Novice fumbled for a pencil, but sleep tied his fingers, and the great thought was irretrievably lost to humanity.

Unexpectedly the tale has a sequel.

Two days were spent at Lonely Camp on that occasion. On the third day we turned about somewhat regretfully and crossed to Cork to meet the Third Man by arrangement. Duffy's tale was told among others several days later, and the Third Man became anxious to prove the loneliness of the camp. So, in due course, we once again anchored between lake and cottage. But fishing was bad, and the Third Man, quickly convinced of the loneliness of the place for all the presence of Daisy Jane, suggested a move towards civilization. Packing in record time we drove on across the moor, arriving later at a village where it seemed convenient to buy bread and salt. The Novice, waiting alone in the car, was presently astonished to see Duffy appear in a near-by doorway. Greetings were exchanged, and then Duffy vanished with a prodigious winking, reappearing with a bottle hidden under his coat. 'Tis meself is after the secret,' he whispered, and tucked the bottle beside the Novice, well out of sight, himself hopping away into the house like a gleeful frog. Careful of his secret, and aware of the inquisitive gaze of a civic guard stationed outside O'Rourke's Medical Hall, the Novice did not reveal the bottle at once. Later, privacy assured, it was opened and the smoky liquid tasted. The liquor was, we judged, potent enough to run a petrol engine, and tasted as might gunpowder

steeped in vinegar. Now the bottle stands in honoured security upon a mantelshelf, and to the curious we explain, 'a rust remover,' hoping always in our hearts for Duffy's ultimate success and the rejuvenation of the world by way of the bottle.

## *Ugliness*

BY ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE

(From *The New Statesman*)

THE superintendent of the cemetery met the newly-bereaved family — two daughters and a son — with the uninterested solemnity which was all that could be expected from him. Up and down the endless paths, across, back again . . . their hearts aching more and more as the congestion more and more revealed itself. And not only the congestion, but (for people with little money) the expense. Nothing was desirable, but much was very expensive indeed; they would not be able to afford what he called, apparently without any sense of incongruity, the front row. However, they did not want to afford the front row; what they wanted was the quietest place. And to them, who had noticed the superintendent's incongruity, their own of 'quietest' did not occur. Wasn't it all quiet — but they knew what they meant; and they did at last see something which responded to that meaning. Behind the long rows of dark-grey pillars — a sort of arcade, which the superintendent told them was 'an architectural decoration' — this narrow slip of grass ran along by the path. Backed by the arcade, and fronted by numbers of ancient moss-grown tombstones under a beautiful hawthorn tree — so that for a moment, in the huge London cemetery, one had the illusion of a country churchyard — this was the only spot they had seen which soothed them a little. Quiet in their sense, secluded from the crowd in every sense, and with that tree in which birds would sing later on. . . . And when they

asked the price (for they had to consider the price), it was high, but they could manage it.

This part was only now being taken into use, the superintendent said; as yet, beside the spot where they were standing, there was but one grave. There would be many, of course, in time; but there could never be so many as there were 'outside,' because there was only the single strip of grass behind the arcade; then the path, and beyond it the moss-grown stones — now, though not kept up, in some way dignified by age and the old-fashioned simplicity of the tablets which nearly all of them were. In other parts of the cemetery the crosses — the thousand crosses — wearied eye and imagination. Though many were in themselves of pure graceful outline, together they made one feel as though their myriad spikinesses must wound the very air.

Yes, this would do.

'It never can be crowded,' said one of the daughters; and though she hadn't put it as a question, the superintendent agreed that it never could.

So they went to the office with him and made that plot their own 'in perpetuity' for quite a considerable price, and came away with hearts consoled in the strange way that hearts can be by things like this when other things are inexorable and will not alter.

'He would have loved that tree and the birds'; and they thought, too, of how he always had loved quietude.

'It seems like one's own — that little part'; and afterwards, when all was done, their friends said the same, and that they were so right to have chosen that place.

The queer sense of consolation lasted; whenever they went there it returned; and when one day they, for the first time, noticed that right across, behind the far-distant wall, you could see the stands of an immense

football ground — and when, on another day, they saw the multitudes rising from those stands when the match was over and streaming, streaming endlessly away, it was not consternation, but awe, that held them silent for a while. Endlessly, endlessly, but so noiselessly (from that distance) streaming . . . it was like — what was it like? ‘The Quick and the Dead’ — that came into their minds; and though they hadn’t noticed the football stands till now, they felt that if they *had*, on the day of choosing the place, they would have chosen it all the more. The contrast seemed to emphasize the quietude; and besides (it was in February) there was the first hint of spring in the air, and it all was as a renewal, a promise.

A little more than a year afterwards one of them went alone to the grave and came home depressed.

‘The ground in front of ours is going to be used for the people’s graves, as the superintendent calls them — the very cheap ones. There are some, you know, right across under the wall, a good way off. But now they’re to come right up.’

‘But there are old graves there already.’

‘I don’t understand it; they seem to be able to take some of those away. A question of money, perhaps — I don’t know. Something monstrous about it; but I suppose they can, and have to.’

Something monstrous about it. . . . Something monstrous, too, about resenting the ‘people’s’ graves — yet was there? A large sum had been paid for seclusion; there had been no warning of any such invasion.

Bitterness filled their hearts, and the vague shame that came along with it made the bitterness worse. All equal in death? Yes; but then why had one to pay high for seclusion? It was, they felt, one of the many instances when sentiment and business are unfairly mingled.

Protest would no doubt be vain; but they ought to have been warned, and then they would have chosen a different place.

And when, soon afterwards, they went together to the place they had paid so highly for——

Would one ever be able to endure the sight of flowers again? They could have carried their own sheaves home with them, so terrible it was to see the gaudy masses, some rotting, with their . . . oh, one ought not to scorn the piteous horrors of those cards with their screaming black edges, their maudlin inscriptions, and the little crosses of pink tin and beads, and the glass ones with flowers painted on them, like no flowers ever seen by any eyes but that young man's who was thought so artistic by his relations, or that girl's 'getting on so well with her painting.' One ought not, but how one did; and to remember the compassionate saying of some great French writer: 'Nowhere does one see so much bad taste, and so much good feeling, as in a cemetery' — that was no good, for it was true beyond endurance.

Instead of seclusion, now there were people, people, people — children crying, children sucking sweets and oranges, while their elders heaped more flowers on the heaped mounds that looked like skeleton backbones when one could see them, as if there wasn't enough earth to go round. This part seemed to have become a meeting-place for neighbours, sitting about in groups and staring at visitors to graves — and worse than that, for a funeral was going on (one of the 'better' sort) and some of the people went to stand round the open grave and stare, commenting on the funeral party, examining the wreaths. Equal in death, perhaps; not equal in life so far as decent feeling went; and the sense that this reflection at any rate could be forgiven them was a sort of relief.



'London does that,' one of them said vaguely as they walked away in their misery. 'In the country those people wouldn't behave so horribly.'

But it wasn't much consolation.

The thing, of course, grew worse and worse; a few months later the invasion was a deluge. The lovely tree was submerged, as it were, by the flooding flowers; the birds didn't sing any more (though it was the middle of May), for there were too many people about.

When the three arrived at their spot they saw, quite close, a young girl standing by one of the graves that had a skeleton backbone, and the backbone was very visible, for the grave was new. Flowers sprawled on it, of course, withering, rotting, broken, tumbling; she had brought some more. Bending low, she was arranging these when the trio saw her; she could scarcely have been closer — there weren't three paces between them and her.

The resentment that possessed them anew with every visit was still stronger to-day, because the sight was worse than ever. Never before had there been so much ugliness, so little quietude. The paths might have been a promenade; and on little bushes, and on the trees, hung bunches of rusty watering pots — this they had never seen till now, nor was it to be seen in any other part of the cemetery, just as only there did the litter-baskets display orange- and banana-skins.

Anger, anger — it surged upon them, overwhelming every other feeling; and their eyes, their scornful hating eyes, took in the hideous scene, took in the girl — meant to take in the girl, meant her to see their repulsion, their detestation. She stood for it all; she was the nearest foe, and their eyes could slay her.

Words, too, could slay her, blighting words of disgust — softly (though very distinctly) spoken, because

gentlepeople do speak softly. . . . And they saw her hear them; they saw her lift her head.

She might not have heard, might not have seen them looking at her; there was nothing in her face but gentleness. They kept their angry eyes upon it, then turned away to put their own white lilac on their grave.

They finished; the girl was still standing by hers that had the skeleton backbone. Her hands that had been busy were tightly clasped together; her face that had been lifted to theirs a moment was bent again, but they could see that it was much paler than before, and that its gentleness was touched with something else that was more than gentleness, that (if one knew the person) one would have said was the look of a creature wounded to the heart, and not resenting it, accepting it, seeing some justice in it. But they did not know the person; and, carrying their tissue-paper away with them rather than recognize the basket with its orange- and banana-skins, they fled the place—the submerged tree and silenced birds, the bunches of watering-cans, the ‘Mumsies,’ ‘Darling little Ernies,’ ‘Sweet little Babsies,’ the pink tin crosses, flabby parrot-tulips . . . all the ugliness.

# *Judas*

BY JOHN METCALFE

(From *The London Mercury*)

JUDAS, most people thought, was an unpleasant child.

When Mrs. Flint, his mother, called him in to 'company' from playing in the yard he could be relied upon to jerk some lady's tea into her lap and to defile the floor with stains of mud and scattered crumbs. When a kindly uncle ('Carroway' it might be, or 'Buffalo') enquired: 'Well, young man, how are you?' he would stand and fidget on one leg and answer vacantly 'Whatsay?'

Sometimes, from out of a dead silence and for no cause that could be guessed, he would break suddenly into a hoarse discordant laugh . . .

Until the evening when his father tipped him the half-crown no one had called him 'Judas.' He had been known indifferently as Walter or as Wallie, names which he privately contemned. 'Wallie' particularly had a sticky taint of sopiness. It would be: 'Wallie, darling, do be quiet; you know I'm lying down' (from his mother, stormily dishevelled at her bedroom window), or 'Wallie, shut it now, you 'ear?' (from his father, exasperated, in his shirt-sleeves, at the back-door). And sometimes Walter Flint would shut whatever beastly row he made but much more often he would not.

The morning of the half-crown day had broken fine and fair. It was a crisp October Saturday. Out in the

\* From *Judas, and Other Stories*, by John Metcalfe. By arrangement with Messrs. Constable & Co., Ltd.

yard, old Perce, the potman, was warming aged blood by stacking empty barrels for the lorry. Walter came clattering hungrily to breakfast.

His father, engaged just then in earnest monologue, gave him no more than a fretful flicker of the eyelid, but Carroway looked up drolly from his bacon. 'Enter,' he said, 'one fairy!'

Fairy, without comment, gulped tea, devoured ham and eggs. Mr. Flint, unconscious or disdainful of an interruption, continued his discourse.

'And 'ave I seen a blessed penny? You'll believe *me!* Bottles an' bottles taken to 'er door, — an' more across the counter. Lived soft, they 'ave, on me. An' tell the tale! Bill, you remember that at Christmas time, las' year?'

Buffalo nodded. 'W'en she sent 'er kid.'

'Young angel-eyes. Blubbin' because 'er mammy was so ill. An' then not brandy, no, nor Invalid's, but whisky! That should a' tole me!'

'The woman's a bad lot,' said Carroway. 'Widows are all the same.'

'Widow!' said Mr. Flint. '*Per-*'aps! I was a fool, but not the only one. All down the road it's bin the same. She's for it now, so 'elp me! If I can find out where they've all vamoosed. . . .'

Walter, for whom this conversation had no interest, fidgeted restively upon his chair. The air this morning held a quickening nip of frost to which the Saturday's elation in his blood made answer. His self-appreciation mounted, overcame him finally. A secret ecstasy convulsed his frame. His shoulders heaved. At last the paroxysm culminated in a shattering roar.

'Wot's the kid laughing at?' enquired Mr. Flint enraged. 'Horrid, your manners are. You shut it now an' cut along to school.'

'No school,' said Walter, ceasing his hoarse crowing and suddenly restored to calm. 'It's Saturday.'

'It's adenoids,' said Carroway despondently and as if making a correction, 'It's them that's got 'im queer. 'E ought to 'ave 'em out.'

'Well, anyhow,' said Mr. Flint, 'you 'op away an' take this cup o' tea up to your mother.'

Walter did so, feeling contumelious and indignant. Then, full of silent ire and rebellion, he wandered through the yard on to the beach.

He was 'so lucky,' everybody told him, to be living here at the seaside instead of back in the *Half Moon* at Camberwell, but with these oft-expressed assurances he was himself in scornful disagreement. The sea, whatever its advantages for other folk, held none for him. It made everything smell the same — or nearly. Brighborough oppressed him by its evident vastness and obnoxious cleanliness. Camberwell, in comparison, seemed cosy, small and intimate to a degree, close-packed with interest. The boys here, who pretended horror when he blew his nose upon his fingers, would have had a hard time with his late schoolmates in the Old Kent Road. The games of these boys were vapid and their lack of enterprise deplorable. Fighting them was too easy to be worth while, and it was practically impossible to lure them into any sort of scrape. Walter, upon a Saturday's whole holiday, was in the perilous position of being actually at a loss to think of anything he really wished to do.

Yet that crisp, salty air which he repudiated carried insistent invitation to employment, energetic action of some kind. On the beach, under the green-and-gilded wooded sign 'FREE HOUSE. THE FANCY STAG' which advertised his father's powers of refreshment to a thirsty world, he picked up a few pebbles, hurled them

venomously at a groyne. 'Scug!' he ejaculated bitterly with every fling, and 'Tripel', deriding an imaginary foe. Presently, as this pastime palled, he stood, with hands in pockets and despondent shoulders hunched, gazing irresolutely up the wind.

All at once an idea occurred to him. There was still the Beaumont's bungalow — upon the whole an interesting residence, set kitty-cornered to the open sea, yet holding for him a vague, flavoursome and reminiscent atmosphere of London. The Beaumonts, of course, *were* Londoners, but his father no longer liked them. It was something about a 'Slate Club,' Walter thought, but wasn't sure.

Fighting the breeze, his toes making deep, sudden hollows in the yielding sand, he felt revived. The present enmity between his father and the Beaumonts lent to this expedition a most satisfactory defiant character. 'Blood!' shouted Walter, '*Blood. . . !*' Opening his mouth at this point in a vain attempt to whistle, he discovered a remarkable phenomenon. Although unable to whistle properly himself against the wind, all he had to do was to keep his lips shaped steady in an O and the wind would whistle for him, making a deep, peculiar sobbing he had never heard before. The sound fascinated him — soft and husky and blowy; it was like a fish. A fish noise. The voice of an old mackerel or a haddock! When he arrived at the Beaumonts' he would get 'Oivy' also to experiment.

'Oivy,' of course, was the one signal disadvantage of the Beaumonts. She was only six and without any proper shame. Her inconvenient affection prompted her at times to hug him violently, even to try and kiss him. As long as he was anywhere in sight she would come tagging hopefully and obstinately after him. Still, upon this occasion, if she could be interested in the fish-noise

. . . Walter blew out his chest. He had arrived now at the bungalow. Despite his natural masculine contempt he felt a certain tolerant and condescending pleasure in the prospect of beholding Ivy once again.

But a surprise awaited him. Running to the front door, he found it shut. There was no answer to his knock or to his ring. When he left the door and looked in through a window he was amazed and chilled to see a room completely bare of furniture. It was the same with other rooms. The house was empty.

Walter explored the Beaumont bungalow exhaustively. He had gone round to the back and found the scullery window left unsnibbed. Mounting a packing-case which he had dragged beneath, he had without much difficulty raised the sash and wriggled through. Now, with his trousers ripped by a projecting nail which took him unawares as he alighted in the sink, he strode excitedly from room to room.

For a while this occupation proved engrossing. In the larder he discovered a decayed remnant of cheese, portion of which he ate with self-approving obstinacy if not actual enjoyment. He investigated, with some minuteness, the Beaumont plumbing system, promoting a mild but satisfactory explosion in the course of his attentions to the geyser. Finally, at the bottom of a hitherto unsuspected cupboard, he came upon a fascinating collection of miscellaneous rubbish, including a portentous host of empty whisky bottles bearing his father's label.

Presently, however, his interest flagged. The possibilities of the deserted house had been exploited conscientiously. Its stark abandonment began, instead of elevating, to depress him, and from the blank, unfriendly walls a curious, melancholy echo of his footsteps, hollowly

resounding on the boards, was given back. He was about to turn away and make his exit through the scullery window when, in the fire-place, something caught his eye.

A delicate papier-mâché limb protruded coyly, gleaming conspicuously nymph-pink against the blackness of the chimney's throat. Walter, approaching with a distinct feeling of scandal, grasped the dangling leg in one hand and, from behind the half-closed register, succeeded finally in disengaging the entire doll. Not the doll only. There were other things besides: bead necklaces, a couple of toy watches, and a length of violet ribbon — all very much the worse for soot. 'Oivy,' obscurely driven by that secretive hoarding instinct which impels dogs to bury bones and squirrels providently to garner nuts, had evidently used the chimney as a *cache*.

Walter ruminated for a while, lugubriously. The discovery of these treasures, and particularly of the doll for which Ivy had entertained a fatuous affection, brought into clear relief a question which had secretly been nagging at his mind since he had entered the abandoned house. Where had the Beaumonts gone? And why? Ivy, quite certainly, would never have left Mary Ella to her grimy fate save by an oversight. Then they were coming back? The chairs and tables — they had gone as well. His spirits sank. Something, he saw, was faintly not all as it should be. There was a mystery here.

Stuffing the watches and the ribbon in his pockets, and swinging Mary Ella by her head, in seeming nonchalance, he returned to the scullery, climbed up in the sink. Before emerging he threw out the doll opprobriously in front of him upon the ground. Nevertheless, he was relieved, when he himself alighted shortly afterwards, to find it still intact.



Through the lean seaside day he walked, with Mary Ella now invisible inside his buttoned jacket. The wind had freshened, blew bobbins and long cocoon-shaped swathes of felted seaweed rolling crazily along the beach. Walter, however, had no eye for anything but the far, sharp-pronged speck of black which, even at a distance of two miles, he could make out distinctly on the water's edge. That was the wreck — the keel and rotting ribs of an old brig. The tide was low, but it would go on falling for an hour yet, leaving the vessel's green-draped, mussel-covered skeleton quite high and dry. On many an occasion previously it had provided a convenient rendezvous. If Ivy were to be discovered anywhere it would be there.

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As a matter of fact he saw her when she was still half a mile away. She too saw him, and walked, with frequent pauses as of indecision, towards him. They met, finally, upon a spur of shingle running out, jetty-like, into the sea.

'Ullo!' said Walter. 'Where you goin', eh? Your 'ouse is all shut up. I was jess comin' to the wreck to 'unt for you.'

He spoke casually, but, as he looked at Ivy, felt a vague uneasiness. The little girl had been crying. Both her face and her blue check pinafore were very grimy. She stared at him, her lower lip trembling, without reply.

'Wot's wrong? An' wot you cryin' for? If I was you I'd gimme face, a\* sloosh. Wash an' brush-up. Ain't you no *sense*? A proper fright you look!'

Still Ivy remained silent. Her curious taciturnity surprised him. Suddenly, as he was about to renew his interrogations more insistently, she turned, burst into tears, and started off away from him along the shingle at a slow, jog-trot run.

'Hi, you — Come 'ere!' In a couple of strides he overtook her. 'Wot's wrong wi' you? Ain't you no manners, huh? Why can't you answer w'en you're spoken to?'

Ivy put up a fist to rub her eyes and nose. 'Ess,' she at last articulated faintly, 'ess.'

'“Yes” — that ain't no answer, is it? *You're* a fine sort of poppy show, I tell you straight. Sight for sore eyes you are!'

But, beneath sarcasm, he was aware of an increasing though unformulated apprehension. What could account for this sustained monotony of grief? Walter loathed problems as he should have loathed the Devil, and here was one beyond his power to solve. All at once, however, an idea struck him. Unbuttoning his jacket, he produced Mary Ella.

'Look 'ere, you shut it now. Stop blubbin'. Fair gives me the needle. 'Ere's your old doll. I found it in the 'ouse. 'Spect you was goin' back for it jess now, eh — wasn't you?'

Ivy's face brightened momentarily. She clutched the doll from his hands, gratefully hugged it to her bosom. 'Ess, 'ess, I was, but — but Mummy . . .' To his unspeakable chagrin she again dissolved in tears.

They stood, in the mewing wind, confronting each other. Ivy was shivering, and yet her cheeks looked hot. Her sobs, not very violent, had a peculiarly depressing character — a wretched, long-drawn, weak, distressful whimpering — fretful and petulantly exhausted rather than healthily grief-laden or indignant. Presently the doll dropped from her grasp on to the stones.

Walter regarded her in supreme dejection. Gradually, a horrible suspicion gathered in his mind. He stared, in something like disgust, at her flushed face and streaming eyes. Yes, he remembered having seen Bill Murphy

look that way when he was starting to have chicken-pox. 'Oivy' was *ill*! In which case, he supposed, she ought to be in bed. . . .

Approaching her, he put a hand upon her shoulder, shook her roughly. 'Look 'ere; where you live now? You tell me where. . . .'

Ivy's expression was at first uncomprehending and obtuse. He had to repeat his question several times before she understood. When at length she murmured a word in weary vagueness Walter was smitten instantly to even greater depths of gloom. '“Souf-'ock”? Souf *Rock*, you mean! Cripes, that's jess *miles* away . . . You *would* live there. . . .'

For a moment he remained, darkly pondering, then stirred abruptly. 'Come orn, an don't stan' blubbin' like as you was struck. You're *ill*, that's wot you are! Let's put a wriggle into it an' git you 'ome. We'll 'ave to take the tram.'

Clasping her by one hand, and picking up the unappreciated Mary Ella from the shingle, he set off towards the town. Ivy, whom the unexpected summariness of these measures had at last stimulated to a fit of genuinely full-blooded, lusty howling, half ran and half was dragged abjectly in his wake.

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In the bounding cream-and-plum-coloured municipal tram to which a rather providential threepenny-bit admitted them, Walter felt bitter and a mug. What if someone he knew should spot him sitting with this snivelling kid and think she was his Little Sister? Or, even worse, and nearer to the shameful truth, reproach him humorously with 'doing a good turn' like a Boy Scout? Mary Ella was once more out of sight inside his jacket, but the indecently lugubrious and stricken Ivy

was something he could not successfully conceal or yet disown.

As the tram swayed, plunging, past long rows of bungalows and rough-cast villas, he sat, in tense rigidity, stealing only an occasional morosely hostile glance at her out of the corner of his eye. A little while ago he had been stirred to a mild curiosity concerning the mysterious transplantation of the Beaumonts, and had intended seeking some enlightenment from Ivy, but now he was too savage and contemptuous to care. Ivy, from being negatively a Nuisance, had become positively a Very-Limit. She was still weeping dolefully in a low whine, slumping down heavily against his side and making everybody stare. No wonder! Simply to look at her gave anyone the creeps. In Walter's mind a dumb, unpleasant speculation hovered formlessly. He tried in vain to edge away from her and then to seem unconscious of her presence. Thanks to this bawling kid his day was spoiled, his precious holiday was ruined irretrievably. . . .

Whilst they drew nearer to their journey's end, resentment mounted, demanded uncontrollably an active vent. Well, he would *give* her something she could blub about, something worth crying at! The tram was jolting to a standstill at the South Rock Terminus, and Ivy had advanced a sticky hand to grasp his own. Walter expertly, circumspectly, elevated a tiny fold of grubby flesh between the nails of his first finger and his thumb, then pinched it — hard.

The yell which instantly broke forth from Ivy's lips brought him a mournful satisfaction, but no more.

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Perhaps it was poetic justice — or dramatic irony — that was to blame for the extraordinarily unenthusiastic — nay actually chilly — character of his reception at the Beau-

monts' new abode. If so, its underlying fine appropriate-ness was concealed from Walter.

On alighting from the tram he had tried, with scant success, to disentangle from his charge's fuddled brain some clearer notion of her parents' whereabouts. Finding the house had proved a tedious and, ultimately, a thankless business. It had indeed taken the best part of half an hour. Trundling his bundle of mewling female misery up and down unfamiliar streets, Walter grew hotter and hotter with moral exercise and righteous self-commiseration. For one thing, Ivy, after the pinch, appeared far less inclined to repose confidence in him than heretofore and had made several vain attempts to break away. This, though he would have been delighted to get rid of her, Walter could not allow. It was with an unbounded and heartfelt relief that, as they were about to pass a stucco villa standing back a little from the road behind a hedge, he perceived Ivy's glance grow fixed in sudden recognition. She stood instantly stock still, tugged at his hand and pointed agonisedly. 'Oh, 'Alter, lemme go . . . It's *there*. . . .'

'There, is it? Well, thank Gawd for that! I'll let yer go an' welcome. *I ain't a-stoppin' yer. No, Miss. . . !*'

Arrived at the front door, he rang the bell and waited — not for long. Almost immediately, as the door opened inwards, Mrs. Beaumont stood confronting him. He heard her gasp.

Ivy was gone — in a twinkling — snatched up from off the step and magically banished from his view within the house. Mrs. Beaumont, staring at him curiously with a face suffused, uttered some words he failed to understand, then gasped again.

Walter looked up at her. Generously deciding to forget his injuries, he constrained his features to a smile,

and it was at this moment that she spoke once more — a strangled 'YOU . . .!' Walter, with the smile still frozenly maintained even while his instinct of self-preservation functioned automatically, saw her clenched fist ascend, dodged to avoid her blow. Another gasp — this time of cheated wrath — and the door banged, slammed violently in his face. He was alone, shut out, in stunned incomprehension, on the path.

Whilst his brain yet remained too numbed for comment or conjecture, his ears, which had so narrowly escaped a 'box,' collected certain interesting sounds for future close consideration and appraisal. There was a noise of yelling and of 'smack-smack-smack.' Ivy, inside the house, was getting spanked.

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He went home soberly. Indeed, it needed all his intellectual robustness to sustain this shock. An entire social ideology had crumbled. In his cynical disillusionment and surprise he even forgot, upon arrival at *The Fancy Stag*, to be hungry for his dinner.

Walter, however, did not make any sustained effort to explain Mrs. Beaumont's conduct, partly because he realized in advance the sheer futility of such attempts, partly because they were not practically necessary. If Mrs. Beaumont's fist had really landed on his face it would have been a different matter. Then he would have been compelled to wonder whether Ivy could have had the time to 'tell on' him about the pinch and to decide this question in the negative — to wonder still. As it was, and being far too sensible to worry long about a blow which had not actually proved effective, he gradually emerged from his astonishment and finished up by making, after all, a hearty if unbalanced meal of apple pie. Not till, unbuttoning his jacket to relieve the strain, he let a

sooty Mary Ella drop incriminatingly upon the floor, was he again reminded of the Beaumont episode.

Carroway, pouncing on the doll, made jocular pretence of extreme horror. 'Where you get *that*?' He held it up for Mr. Flint's and Buffalo's mute admiration. But not mute for long. Mr. Flint instantly divined something compromising and suggestive about Mary Ella. The whole story had to come out. There was excited conversation, and Mrs. Flint was called down to survey and to corroborate the portent. Walter, expecting to be scolded, sat dimly resentful and nonplussed amidst a rising din of amused, chuckling voices. He was about to vanish tactfully into the yard when Mr. Flint abruptly called him back.

'Hi, not so fast! You know that 'ouse — the new one? You're goin' to show me, see? Right now! Come on, along o' me!'

Thus it fell out that Walter, in his father's company, journeyed a second time, embarrassedly, to South Rock. Mr. Flint, looking flushed but incongruously Sundayfied in a bowler hat, stalked the house heavily from a distance of fifty yards, and then, having made what appeared to be a satisfactory entry in his note-book, winked knowingly at Walter, slapped him on the back. 'Come orn. We'll get 'ome now.'

That was all that Walter was immediately to receive by way of explanation, but later, just before the bar was due to open, Mr. Flint put thumb and finger in his waistcoat pocket and produced a shining coin.

'Ere, you take this. It's the first time you've ever bin a scrap o' use, far as *I* know . . . Take it, I say. 'Twon't bite yer!'

Walter accepted the half-crown in sullen silence and with an air of making mental reservations. Buffalo,

whom anteprandial potations 'on the house' had perhaps rendered literary, broke into coarse guffaws. 'Look at the little devil! A-stannin' there! — Like . . . 'E's like Judas! — *Judas*, I say, that's what the little blighter is! *Judas*! Now go an' 'ang yussel!'

## II

As footnote, postscript or addendum to events narrated, came, on a dreary afternoon in mid-November, one last belated echo of the Beaumont mix-up.

Over a month had passed since Walter's father gave him the half-crown, and in the meantime Walter had been chiefly occupied in being ill. For this reason, indeed, and with a characteristically adult unfairness, the half-crown had been abstracted from him till he should recover and be 'well enough' to spend it. Like a confiding fool he had neglected to foresee this danger, had delayed making up his mind about what he should buy until too late — till he was prone and powerless in bed. If, during these five weeks, his thoughts had run at all upon the Beaumonts, it had been with a pardonable vindictiveness, for it was from young 'Oivy,' everyone agreed, that he had certainly caught scarlet-fever.

Now, however, the half-crown had been restored. He was downstairs, for the second time, reclining wan and fretful in the yet unopened bar, and exquisitely devoured by ennui. From his position on the padded settle he tried again in desperation to make out the war-time notices behind the counter — framed regulations forbidding the 'long pull' and signed by someone curiously known as 'Competent Authority.' He gave it up. Closing his eyes he gradually relapsed into a dreamy languor, though not falling actually asleep. As it happened, he *was*



thinking, intermittently and vaguely, of the Beaumonts in particular of Ivy.

The Beaumonts, it was understood, had 'opped the rent,' — or had endeavoured to — had decamped to the distant suburb of South Rock to avoid payment of the money owed both to their landlord and to Mr. Flint, and to many tradesmen in the town besides. Thanks to him, Walter, their unlawful schemes had failed. Mr. Flint could now make them pay or have them 'summoned' if he wanted to — and that was how the unexampled tribute of the half-crown had been earned — why Buffalo had suddenly come out with 'Judas.'

Who was Judas? Someone in the Bible who had done something very mean. But Walter didn't care. He was mildly sorry that he would not see the Beaumonts any more — neither Ivy nor yet her two sisters, Gladys and Euphemia — but his regret was tempered both by scarlet-fever and by memories of Mrs. Beaumont's upraised fist. Upon the whole it served them all quite right. And, anyhow, his father, he believed, was letting them off lightly. Only the day before yesterday he had heard his mother reproaching Mr. Flint with being 'soft,' and his father replying in an apologetic and embarrassed way that 'Come now, it wasn't fair to 'it 'em when they was all down an' hout.' Well, he was sick and tired of the Beaumonts now. It wasn't *his* concern . . . Finally he dropped off into a doze.

Suddenly he roused, with a start. There were voices in the adjoining saloon bar. When Walter fell asleep Carroway had been in there, smoking silently, to 'keep an eye on him,' but now his father had joined Carroway, his mother too.

'You see 'ere, Clara, there's a limit, see? A limit. Wot I sez is, you couldn't do a thing like that to 'em, not now.

'Twouldn't be 'uman, and I'm not a-goin' to, that's flat . . . S'posin' our Wallie 'ere 'ad gone an' crocked, 'ow would *you* feel? I *ask* yer!

There was a pause. Walter was shivering. What did this mean? Already he could guess. In that tram, when he had been sitting next to Ivy, he had been frightened of her in a way he couldn't understand. Even when he pinched her there had been that dark, unreasoned fear . . . Now he felt sick, hoped that he wasn't going to hear what he was bound to hear. In vain, Mr. Flint, to whom no answer had been made by Mrs. Flint, resumed, his voice vibrating huskily with some emotion which sounded near to anger, but which, as Walter realized with a sort of horrible embarrassment, was nothing of the kind.

'Wot's more, I'm givin' 'em a fiver, see? Any complaints? 'Cos if you 'ave they won't be listened to. *Wot's* more, we're sendin' 'em a wreath. Funeral's on Friday, in the afternoon. We may be Flints, but we're not *Skinflints*, see? We're sendin' 'em a wreath — a *good* one, see?'

Walter sank back on to the cushions of the settle. He felt enraged and terrified at the same time. It was lucky that at this moment a diversion was occasioned by a loud ring at the front-door bell. Carroway came through from the saloon bar and admitted Jackie Torrance, a school friend of Walter's. The one-sided discussion between Flints was mercifully discontinued.

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Jackie Torrance had gone, but he was coming back again. For a quarter of an hour he had sat, uncomfortably polite, making lack-lustre conversation with the invalid. Walter, meantime, had been considerably more ill at ease and wretched than his visitor. He was not particularly chummy with Jackie, but had clutched at him as he would

desperately have clutched at any straw . . . All the while they were talking rapidly about stamps and birds'-eggs and school politics, Walter was taking his mind by the scruff of its neck and hurling it violently away from Ivy — from the picture of her sitting snivelling in the tram, from the sound of her yells when she was being spanked, and from the wreath which would be sent for her on Friday. Progressively, his spirits had declined to such an obvious ebb that Jackie too had grown lugubrious — had only brightened when the half-crown was produced.

Mr. Flint now entered, blowing his nose, and stared down solemnly upon his offspring. 'Wallie,' he said, 'you listen 'ere. There's somethin' that I want to say to you.'

Walter stiffened. His gaze, had Mr. Flint but known it, held a wild hostility. As his father proceeded, however, he bent his eyes upon the floor, and Mr. Flint continued, quite unconsciously.

'Them Beaumonts — p'r'aps you 'eard us talkin' in the other room jess now. Well, that there little gal o' theirs — she's died. Las' night it was. 'Ad a *re*-lapse she did. We're — well, we're goin' ter send a wreath, and . . .' It was coming now. For all that quarter of an hour while he was talking with Jackie Torrance Walter had seen it coming, been torn in anguished indecision, vacillation, '— an' I bin thinkin', Wallie — That there arf-crown I give you, well, it ain't quite kinder *nice* ter keep it now. See wot I mean? We're goin' ter send the little gal a wreath, like wot I said. A wreath, see? — for 'er grave, an', well, I put it hup ter you now, Wallie, if . . .'

Suddenly Mr. Flint stopped, amazed. Walter, his weakness notwithstanding, had begun violently to stamp upon the floor. His voice rose in a scream. 'You can't 'ave it — you can't! I've — I've spent it on — on tuck. I've spent it all on tuck . . . !'

For a moment there was an electric, awful pause. Then Mr. Flint began: 'You *spent* it! Spent an 'ole arf-crown, an' all on sweets! When did —'

But at this juncture Mrs. Flint saw fit to intervene. Hearing the commotion, she had promptly descended, very out of temper, from her bedroom, planted herself dramatically between her son and husband. 'Bob, now you stop a-pitchin' into 'im, you 'ear? 'E's *ill*! Way you be'ave you'd think you 'ad no *sense*, to start a-worritin' the kid like that, and . . .'

There was a ring at the bell. Mrs. Flint, in her turn, was interrupted by the somewhat inopportune and sheepish advent, as it presently appeared, of Jackie Torrance, who was bearing a large paper bag. Jackie, instantly sensible of having precipitated himself into an atmosphere of social tension, looked at first shamefaced and abashed, then definitely scared. 'I — I can't stop. Got ter be 'ome by quarter-past, yer know. 'Ere, Walter, 'ere's the tuck.' Depositing the bag in Walter's lap, and hardly pausing to receive the generous share which his friend forced into his hands, he hastily made off.

The slam of the front door after his departure was succeeded by a silence. Walter considered the sweets — dubiously, and at last with actual revulsion. A lump rose in his throat. Suddenly he lifted the bag, hurled it, with all his force, across the room. Chocolates, iced caramels and pineapple creams were scattered in profusion on the floor.

Outcry ensued. The scene was, almost, a domestic saturnalia. To the combined vituperations of his parents and two uncles Walter now added, lustily, his own complaint. He found himself crying, howling, his eyes scalded with tears — he didn't know why. It was his mother, not his father, finally, who smacked him, though with more

sound than fury, on the cheek. As she was bearing him away incontinently to bed, he heard her, in a dream, exclaiming over and over: ' . . . and the waste, the wicked *Waste* . . . !' But that didn't matter. To all the inconvenient consequences attending unregenerate behaviour he was by this time thoroughly inured. It was not that. It was something much worse, more private and unfathomable, vaguer . . . something that no one — not even he himself — could ever properly explain or understand.

He had wanted, still wanted, passionately, to be rid of Ivy, to forget her and especially his curious fright of her, to forget absolutely all about her, so that he need never think of her again.

## Treasure in the Dune

BY E. R. MORROUGH

(From *The London Mercury*)

‘IT all came,’ old François-Marie Ménégauz used to say, ‘from a fight in a bar at Port Said. Ah, Monsieur, those days! I was a *sous-officier* on a dredger when they were making this Suez Canal, and Georges Delalande was engineer. A merry fellow, short, *trappu*, with a round face and a round belly, always gay. This hotel of mine did not then exist. Even this town of Ismailia was hardly thought of.

‘A man was stabbed, a Frenchman. We carried him to hospital, Georges and I. He knew he was going to die, and begged us to stay with him. At night he told us things. He boasted how, single-handed, he, Fénélon, had held up the guard and robbed a treasure van on the old Cairo-Suez Railway that used to run through the desert. It has been pulled up these twenty years. He had carried off two heavy chests consigned to the Banque des Indes Orientales. *Le pauvre*, he had no luck. His camel died under him a few miles short of the Delta, and he had to bury his chests unopened in the soft sand of the Gebel Abyad dunes. For two years he had been trying to get back to unearth them. He was taken for the *corvée* — being in Arab dress — he was ill, he was imprisoned, he was shipwrecked. *Quelle diable de chance!* And now all was finished.

‘He described to us how we should know the place, by a sight on Cairo Citadel through a gap in the ridge of

hills, and the bones of his camel. Thirty metres north of them we should find the treasure.

'He died before sunrise. We went out into the dawn wind blowing damp and cool off the Mediterranean, and walked on the sand to shake the smell of death out of us. The spirits of Georges rose with the sun. We would go off, we two, and get that treasure. Then leave this dirty ditch that men were digging in the heat and back to a little farm in France, or perhaps a big farm, and to marry. Georges talked much of the daughter of an innkeeper at Sarmade on the Saone. As for me, Madame ——' Uncle Ménégau would kiss his hand towards the figure like three balls balanced one on the other behind the accounts desk — 'was already enshrined in my heart.'

'Now I could not tell you by what tales of an uncle dying in Cairo we got a week off from this Canal. Georges babbled so in the train that I thought everyone would know what we were after. Ah, that girl of Sarmade, what cheeks she had, what eyes, what hips!

'We carried two days' food, a big water bottle, each a blanket, a heavy hammer and cold chisels and an axe for these great chests. People in the train wondered when we got out at a halt in the desert where there was nothing, nothing whatever except an Arab and a water cistern.

'It was noon but not so hot in that open desert as in the gully of the Canal. Also we were exalted. We did not wait for the sun to decline. We started north. Georges was all anxious. 'Do you think someone has found it? These sand dunes do not always stay in the same place. The one like a pyramid at the mouth of the Bitter Lake has moved since they started to dig past it. If the chests have become uncovered some Arab will certainly have stolen them. The hound, let me catch him! I will break

his bones for him. I will choke him till he gives up our inheritance. I . . .'

' "Tranquillize yourself, my lad," I said. "Do we yet know that the chests are gone?"'

'We walked north to cut the Darb-el-Hajj. It was unmistakable, running as distinct as a boulevard, forty-fifty, hard-beaten camel tracks parallel to one another.

'We turned west along it, facing towards the palm trees of El Marg which we could not yet see. In front and on our right the dunes that are called Gebel Aybad came sweeping down towards the Darb. Very brightly white they looked in the afternoon sun.

'As we progressed, it became clear that the Darb ran along their feet as a road runs along under a range of hills that are true hills. These are veritable mountains of sand, Monsieur, fifty metres, sixty metres high, I suppose, at the peaks, all white, all clean, no stones, no grass. At their feet hard gravel without any loose sand at all, as though a great broom had swept every grain on to the dune. I tell you, Monsieur, there is something extraordinary about these dunes.

'There were the remains of a camel every half-kilometre along the Darb, but at first it was clear open ground on the south, and all the time as we walked we could see very far away, against the background of the Moqattam Hills, Cairo Citadel. Then a low ridge began to grow, hemming the Darb in on one side, while the dunes came closer on the other. Georges was trembling with excitement. He began to shout and run. To each carcase of a camel we went and looked for the Citadel. At last, when I calculated we could not be more than twenty kilometres from El Marg, we came to a heap of bones with the hide still stretched upon them and hard as a board. Standing by them, we could see the Citadel through a gap in the hill.



'Monsieur, believe me, the sand of the dune came down to the bones themselves and it rose steeply into a great ridge above. "*Cinq cent milles sacrés cochons*," screamed Georges, "the dune has moved, and the wrong way." He flung himself down and began to dig like a mad thing. The sand flew out as it does behind a terrier, or behind one of those great burying-beetles they have here in Egypt.

'As for me I was sad for Georges, but for myself I was not so moved. My father had a little property and my Hélôise was not so unattainable for me as that peach from Sarmade for poor Georges. I could not help Georges. I should only have got my eyes full of sand for my pains. Of course he made no progress, less than none at all. The sand was very fine indeed, quite powdery, and as he dug, it simply poured upon him from the slope above. For all his work and fury Georges could not make a hole a foot deep.

'After a little while he stood up quite tired. He wept, Monsieur, and cursed the dune as if it could hear him. Then, just like a child who is mad with rage, he rushed at its steep side and began to batter his toes into it. It gave way under him. He lost his balance, and rolled down "plonk" against the dry hide of the old camel.

'I climbed to the top of the dune. It was perhaps thirty metres high and its crest narrower than a pony's back, like the peak of a very steep gable roof. I sat comfortably with one leg down the north side, of the hill and one down the south. Below, there was Georges, head in hands, desolated. The ridge I was on was very long and very narrow. It could not have been more than sixty metres thick at the base, and on the north was a stretch of clear ground in front of more dunes. It was a strange thing this welter of knife-edged white hills all curving so smoothly.

'A strong breeze was blowing. The extreme top of each ridge was, as it were, smoking. The crest of my hill was crumbling between my knees as the grains blew off down wind, feeding the slope towards Georges and the camel. I imagined that this was the very process by which the chests had been buried deep so that they were now below the spot where I was sitting, under thirty metres or so of sand.

"Georges," I said, "take heart. In time, as this dune has moved on over the chests it will pass southwards and uncover them again. It is very narrow and there is clear ground on the other side of it. Let us come a year from now and then another year."

'For a moment he thought. Then he said, "I shall live near here and watch. Suppose there were one big storm like the sandstorm that half filled the Canal in a night opposite kilometre 80? François, I shall stay and watch. You are a good friend. What the dune uncovers, we will share." I argued with him as we walked along to El Marg with the setting sun blazing into our faces. "Perhaps," I said, "this Fénélon was lying. Perhaps he buried no treasure here at all. And I do not believe that this dune can have moved thirty metres in two years. I believe that it will take years and years and years to march on over the camel and leave the chests clear on the other side. Come back with me."

'We slept that night in the hut of a fellah and the next as well. All day I argued with him. I was sad to leave him so, alone amongst these Arabs. He would not even return with me to draw the balance of his pay. "You will draw for me, François, and send it," was all he would say.

"But, my Georges," I answered, "how will you live? Return and work only till you can get the gratuity they promise when your contract is completed. Then you will

have something to keep you while you watch this *sacré* dune."

'You ask, Monsieur, why we did not hire workmen to dig, Georges and I. How to pay them? To get into that vile soft sand we should have needed many men and planks and stones in a place where there was none of these things. Everyone in the desert and the Delta would wonder what we were digging for and would be on the watch to see. No. Impossible. Impossible.

'At last I turned and went to Cairo to get train to Suez. I gave Georges every sou I had beyond my fare. I promised to come back on the anniversary of that day if I could not come before. For his part Georges said that he would every other day walk out to the dune to look for the chests. I was sorry to leave him along among those beasts of fellahin. I entreated him again. I wept. We both wept. I said for the thousandth time: "The dune cannot march so far in a year, or in two years. Come away with me for a year." But he would not.

'When I was back at Suez, a surprise. The Chef de Service sent for me and said: "Blanquier is dead, Fombles is sick; you are named acting-captain." So for a year I worked as acting-captain of our dredger, and when the time came round for me to go to El Marg it was a question who should be promoted to full captain and I did not want to go away. I wrote to Georges instead. I sent him a contribution to the expenses of the partnership in which I was the sleeping one, and I begged him to write. I got a reply to say that he would keep the money, but he was managing to live. And he had put marks into the dune to see how much it had moved. Unless there was a great gale from the north he thought at least another year must pass before the dune would have marched clear of the chests.

'At the next anniversary I was very ill, too ill to write or to care whether Georges answered. There was much fever on the Canal in those days, Monsieur. They sent me home to France to recover. For months I sat in the sun like a sleepy snake. When I was getting well the end of the Canal was in sight, so instead of returning to Egypt I was paid off and took my gratuity. One day I walked to Sarmade. The daughter of the inn-keeper was married. I wrote to Georges for the anniversary of our treasure hunt, but I did not tell him. He answered saying that things had been going well but a great south-west *khamsein* had driven back the dune so far as to expose for a day or two one of the camel's feet once more. And he was well.

'I did not beg him to desist. What had I to offer him? But my H  lo  se and I decided that when he found those chests we would not touch a sou of their contents. Ah, I did not tell Monsieur that we were married as I began to get well. Then a letter came from a man I knew on the Canal wanting us to join him in an hotel business here. My father on the farm was strong and well though getting on in years; he did not need me. Things were bad in France for an ex-dredger captain. Madame and I came. This very hotel, Monsieur, only it was "Cr  billard and M  n  gaux" until my partner died.

"The fourth anniversary we were very busy settling into this hotel. Everything new, not as it is now. But when the fifth anniversary came I said, "Now this year I will go." I wrote to Georges and arranged that he should meet me at the railway station in Cairo.

'I think I should have had to look twice or three times to recognize my Georges, but he was waiting for me on the platform; he ran to me and kissed me on both cheeks. The jolly little belly that he used to push before him so

exultantly was gone. He looked much older. His feet were bare and thrust into a pair of fellah's sandals. One would have thought he knew my eyes had noticed them. "Two hundred kilometres of walking each week, ten thousand in a year, one would have to be a millionaire to keep oneself in boots," François," he cried. He was gay.

'We hired donkeys to take us out to El Marg, and on the way Georges told me how he made a living.

' "With the money you have sent I have bought a gun, François. In the winter many ducks come to the pools here. I shoot, and sell them to the Cairo market. I have a field of beans. Also, I trade a little, like any Greek, a twist of tobacco, a box of matches, a cone of sugar. You see, I live."

'We turned from the track through the date-groves of El Marg, where the dates were hanging in bright red bunches on their way to getting ripe. Georges had built himself a hut a little apart from the other habitations, on the desert side of the last canal — in order, he explained, to be near our dune.

'It was the ordinary hut of a peasant, walls of sun-dried mud-brick, with a flat roof of palm-trunks. Above, cakes of cow-dung drying in the sun for fuel. Georges opened a door. "Enter, old friend, and *marhabteyn*, twice welcome." It was a miserable hole, dark, with walls of the dull-grey of the mud-brick, one chair, one little tumbledown table made of boxes. From a lair behind, which was the sleeping-place, a young Arab woman came at Georges' call, with an infant. She pulled a piece of her dress across her mouth as she greeted me, as any other fellah girl would have done.

'Next day we were away with the dawn when it was cool. We followed a track as straight as a string that Georges had made direct to our dune in walking so many

times. I have never known a path so long beaten hard by one man. A sentry's beat, yes; but this was twenty kilometres. The sun rose a little on our left, and I remember how Georges' path showed up in the first warm-coloured rays like a little purple line across the tawny desert. The dunes of Gebel Abyad lay stretched out before us, palest orange, with deep purple shadows behind the crests. "That is our dune," said Georges, "and the saddle between the two highest peaks is where Fénélon's camel died."

'We went on in silence. Soon we were close to the nearest dunes. They rose, sinuous, extraordinary, like gigantic waves petrified and yet still capable of movement.

'Georges, shuffling along in his sandals, burst out, "Is she not beautiful, the bitch?" I saw by his gaze he meant the dune. "Sometimes I think she is a great animal crouching over our treasure. She has a kind of life. See, what liteness, what curves?" Then he told me at length all the ways this dune of ours had moved through the five years, sometimes forward steadily for months, then taken aback by a *khamzin*, but generally in the right direction.

"The camel was completely buried and the sand was beginning to cover a pole that Georges had set up thirty yards further south. At that rate the dune should have marched forward almost the width of its base. But when I climbed to the top I felt sure that the dune was higher than it had been five years before and broader at the base. Yet a little Georges would have to wait.

'We walked back to Georges' hut almost in silence. Once he turned round and stared at that dune and said again, "Is she not beautiful?" As for me I was trying to think of means to get him away. I was faint-hearted. I had ceased to believe in the treasure or to care for it. "Come away,"

I said, "back with me. We want help in the hotel," which God knows was a lie, and I cannot think what my partner Crébillard would have said about it. But of course Georges always refused.

'It was five, six years before I saw him again. Truly, each anniversary I meant to go, but now Crébillard was ill and I must do all the business, now Madame was bearing me a child and now — oh, I do not know. Yet we wrote, Georges and I, and he was much in my thoughts. Madame was greatly moved when I told her how Georges was living, poor fellow. Often she would make up a hamper for him with good wines and good food such as could travel in this heat without spoiling. She wished also to send clothes. And after the first hamper had been packed and sent off I missed my second pair of boots. "*Quelle femme*," I said to her. "But thou mightest have saved us both trouble, my Héroïse. Georges takes two sizes bigger than I."

'All these years it was no very great news he had to tell me of the dune. Sometimes, he said, it went forward and sometimes back a little. Most of his letters mentioned that he had been ill but was now getting better. It was always the same — patience and hopefulness.

'One day I read in a newspaper that the Banque des Indes Orientales had broken. Great scandal. The directors had speculated in Panama Canal shares. All was finished, and the bank had ceased to exist. I wrote to tell Georges. "So much the better," I said. "No one now remains to own these chests. I have now some money. In a little while when affairs are wound up we could hire men to dig." To my surprise he answered that he would come to see us here at Ismailia. The dune seemed not to be moving at all in the way we wanted it to, and he could leave it without watching for a few days.

‘Georges, who was much less than forty, looked sixty. He was thin and grey-haired and his clothes hung loosely round him. His great round face was sunk, collapsed. Hardly waiting till we had greeted each other, he said, “François-Marie Ménégaux, I have a confession to make to you, and that is why I have come. Now that we could pay diggers I have lost the exact spot where we should dig. Careless animal that I am. More than once my marks have been blown down in storms and now I do not know within a hundred metres where we should set to work. As thou knowest, it would take a thousand men, ten thousand, to sort over all our dune. I feel as if I had robbed these little ones —” he waved his hand towards our children — “of their inheritance.”

‘Of course we overwhelmed him with denials; the treasure was nothing to us, we didn’t want it, had never counted on it, had vowed to each other in the first days of our married life that we would never touch a sou of it. It was all his, Georges’, who had worked for it as not many men work for a fortune.

‘He seemed comforted. He began to smile. “Nevertheless,” he said, “you will let me make a present to these little ones when the time comes, *hein?*” We prevailed upon him to stay with us a little while. He was not difficult to persuade; he promised to stay four days; but on the second day he seemed restless and unhappy. “François,” he asked me, “is there not a dune near here? I think I remember. But eleven years is a long time, and this Ismailia of yours was not here then.” I told him that there was one down the lake. He said he wanted to go to look at it and asked the way. “It is far to walk and on loose sand,” I answered. “If you must go I will send you in a boat. But must you go when you are with us so short a time?” He did not answer, only moistened his lips with



his tongue and smiled as one who is not sure of himself. I could see he wanted much to go, so I set him on his way for this dune of ours. "*Le pauvre*," I said to Madame, "he has these sand-heaps on the brain, and no wonder."

'He returned a few hours later. "Too small, François, it is too small. And no ferm about it, none at all." Madame looked across at me. She shook her head a little and her lips framed the word "*Tocq-Tocq*."

'The next morning Georges said he must be going; he had never left our dune unlooked at for so long. As he was clearly unhappy we did not press him further to stay.

'The years went on. Sometimes we exchanged a letter. The dune moved a little. Every few months we sent him a hamper. Crébillard died. The hotel became Ménégaux *tout simple*. Then one day there came a telegram "*Viens, Georges*." Whether that meant that he was dying or had found the treasure, we did not know.

'He met me at Cairo station. He looked an ancient man. "François, a corner of a chest was showing yesterday."

'It was too late to start that day. We slept in his hut. There was no Arab woman there now. It seemed that Georges lived alone. We set off early in the morning. Georges walked heavily, not at all like a man who is going to pick up the treasure he has been waiting for so long. The early sun was lighting up the sandhills just as it had when we were last there so many years before.

'Georges spoke as if to himself. "*Dieu*, how beautiful she is!"

'He said no word of what he would do with the wealth. I wondered if he had forgotten Sarmade as Sarmade had certainly forgotten him.

'By the time we were close under the dunes the sun was

high. They were the colour of cream and they shone most brilliantly in the sun. There was not the smallest inequality or shadow on their sunward faces. Georges stepped close in front of one of them and stared and stared at its surface as if he were seeking for a pebble or a blade or a twig, which certainly were not there. I did not wish to look at such a blaze of light and such emptiness. Georges began to sway. I thought he would fall. I took him by the arm. "Ah, yes," he said, and led me over the dune to the far side. Almost as we pulled each foot up, the hole it had made in the sand was filled. When we were on the top there was nothing to show the way we had come except a ladder of the very faintest dimples, which a ghost could not have climbed.

'On the far side, in the valley between one dune and the next, it was hot and still. Close to the bottom of the sand slope the edges of two chests showed side by side, like rocks sticking out of the sea, but so black and sharp that it gave one a veritable shock to see them in a world that was all white and of the softest curves.

'Georges did not hurry. He did not tremble. He produced a hammer and cold chisels, the very ones we had brought with us the first time we came, fifteen years and more before. It was hard work. The dry sand of the dune had kept the chests as strong as when they were made. I took a turn at the work, then Georges again. I can tell you, it made us sweat.

'At last we could fling back the lid. Gold? Silver? Coin? Ingots? None of them. Banknotes, notes of the Banque des Indes Orientales, packets and packets of thousands of newly printed ones, the notes of a bank that had bust. I feared to look at Georges. He took a packet and broke the string. He tossed them into the air. There was so little breeze in the hollow there that most

of them fell back straight. A few hopped and fluttered along the surface of the sand as flaws of wind caught them. Georges was watching them quite distraught. His lips were pursed and curved into a half-smile such as one wears with a lifting of the eyebrows when some trifling thing has gone wrong that matters not at all.

'I supposed that the disappointment had turned his brain. All was still except for the very small sound of a banknote rustling on the sand. Georges was first to break the silence. He spoke quite normally. "It would be a pity to leave the other box without seeing inside." We set to work. It was harder to open than the first because Georges did not seem to care, and I cared only for Georges. At last the second chest was open. More banknotes.

'We climbed back to the top of the dune and sat. I brought out the food I had carried for us both.

' "Come back with me to the hotel, old friend," I said. "There is a home for you. Live with us, *mon vieux*. You have spent your life working half for me, though I swear to you, Georges, that we would not have taken a half share of the treasure. Let me even the account a little, my Georges. Hélöise will be as glad as I."

'For a long time Georges sat without speaking. Then: "It hurts me, François, *mon ami*, to refuse an offer so generously made. But it is impossible that I should leave this place. Figure to yourself that this heap of sand has become a necessity of life to me. I know every curve and wave of this dune, always changing, and yet so slowly that she is always the same. Is she not the most beautiful thing in the world? Svelte, graceful, all sweet curves like the virgin one loved when one was young. Pure, clean, unspotted as an angel. See, on one side when the sun shines, a blaze of light; on the other, meeting the light in one line, which is firm, yet exquisitely supple, a

dark blue shadow. Colour, utterly pure. Nowhere else in the world can one find such a great sweep of clear monotone. The sea, the hills, the desert; each is made up of a thousand colours marked with a thousand stipplings. Only a grand desert dune can give this uttermost unity of colour. In France on the edge of the sea we have dunes. Blades of grass grow out of them. Impure. Impure. At Ismailia you have your little dunes; too small; a man can see that they have height and depth and thickness like himself. But she, this dune of mine, can draw the heart and soul and brain out of a man, drain him of hope and fear, regret and desire; and while he gazes at her leave him a husk, light as a bubble and as empty.

“Let a man stand below her and gaze at her flank, raising his face a little. You shall try it, François. She is so tall that, to one gazing so, she has no crest, so long, that she has no end. In all that one’s eyes can compass there is not a single mark on which they can focus. In this giant picture there is not one solitary speck or line where a man’s thought can set its feet. There are no bounds, no depth, no design. One is projected into infinity, into the bosom of God.”

“You perceive, Monsieur, my Georges, ex-engineer on a dredger, spoke like a lover, a poet, a *religieux*. He took me down to the base of the dune and insisted that I should taste his experiences. It is true. I became, as it were, dizzy, in a most strange and pleasurable way. It is not good to stare too long at an emptiness where there is nothing to see. Almost I lost my senses and fell. Now I began to understand. Where another man would have solaced himself with wine, Georges had drugged himself with draughts of this infinity of his, so that now he could not do without them.

“It was a lie,” said Georges, “when I told you at Ismailia that we could not hire men to dig because I had lost the position. I knew it perfectly, but I was in a panic. I could not endure that men should come cutting into this pure body, defiling the fount of infinity. I must come here till I die.”’

## *Liars*

BY FLORIDA PIER

(From *This Quarter*)

I HAD been a week in the *pension*, when Mademoiselle Béraud, who sat opposite at the long table, startled me by making herself look like a monkey. I had noticed her good clothes and manners, on the day of my arrival. I had shaken hands with her, when she had indicated that it was the moment for shaking hands. I had even had a half-desire to bear myself with something of her grave formality, that I might not represent my country badly in her eyes. Then suddenly, on looking across the table, I saw that instead of sitting with an erect and unsupported spine as she had hitherto, she was now oddly hunched, her head a little on one side, her upper lip made very long, and her gaze fixed on something close beside her. It took me a moment to discover what she was staring at in that apish way.

Her eyes were fixed upon the earring of the Englishwoman sitting next to her. It was of glass, and looked as if it had come from some large shop, mounted, no doubt, on a piece of cardboard. Her stare was so steady that I wondered how Miss Cunningham could not be conscious of it too. She, however, continued to eat hurriedly, only pausing now and again to readjust a heavy woollen wrap about her shrivelled arms. She was very plain, slight and elderly, perhaps fifty, perhaps more. She looked subdued and weary.

Mademoiselle Béraud leaned towards her and asked, 'What kind of stone is that in your new earrings?'

'Cornelian, Chinese.' The little woman did not raise her head as she spoke, but went on eating, as though she feared she might be late.

Mademoiselle Béraud murmured, 'Magnificent! But then you always wear very handsome jewels.' Her eyes told one by one the rope of large beads encircling Miss Cunningham's neck. Her gaze made their owner glance down at the beads too. Miss Cunningham drawled, 'I keep most of my things in the bank. It's safer. These pearls are not real, only very good imitations.' Mademoiselle emitted a note of surprise in a soft purr through her nose.

Then the dessert was brought in, and as soon as Miss Cunningham again bent over her plate, Mademoiselle Béraud resumed her hunched pose and her unblinking stare at the earring. It seemed to be her way of saying across the table, 'She lies, her earrings are of glass, she bought them at the Louvre. She buys all her jewellery at the Louvre. Everything she says is a lie; watch me, and you will see what I can make her say.' I dropped my eyes, but I knew that the Frenchwoman had not changed her pose.

On Miss Cunningham's beginning to fold up her napkin, Mademoiselle Béraud again leaned over and asked, 'How many times have you heard *La Bohème*? Ten times, haven't you?'

'Oh, no, only seven.' Miss Cunningham looked white, and her cheeks were caught up in little puckers.

'But don't you know every note of it by now?' persisted Mademoiselle Béraud, putting her head on one side, and making her brown eyes look dull beneath her drooping lids.

'Oh, but I love it!' exclaimed Miss Cunningham.

'Or perhaps you love the new tenor?' queried Mademoiselle in her nasal purr.

Miss Cunningham rose from the table twittering good-nights to every one. She gathered up a velvet bag, made sure of having her ticket, and said to right and left, '*Bonne amusement, bonne amusement, bonne soir.*'

Mademoiselle Béraud wrinkled her brows with exaggeration, and asked of the table in general, 'What does she say? I do not understand. *Bonne* what? What language was she speaking?' Miss Cunningham had reached the door, and as she opened it, Mademoiselle Béraud called out amiably, '*Bon amusement*: don't go to sleep during the opera?'

My face was tingling with the blows I felt Miss Cunningham to have received. She might so well have cried out in protest, but she had kept up her affable noddings and little swaggering laugh right up to her shutting of the door.

I made my way between gilt tables and chairs to a corner of the salon and began reading. I had scarcely found my place on the page, when a soft voice asked if I would permit myself to be interrupted. It was Mademoiselle Béraud. She was now all suavity and elegance; there was even something fine in the calm mask of her face. She said that she had heard I was inquiring where I might have some books rebound. Could she take me to-morrow to a most admirable man? It would be a great pleasure if she might indicate the route herself.

I protested that I could not claim so much of her time. She closed her eyes and said that she loved to be of use. She had spent her entire life caring for others. Then, with a quick change to a little girl's delight, she showed me a jacket that she had just made for the cook's niece. I knew that she was constantly employed in such activities for others. Only the night before I had seen her working late on something else not for herself. As she pointed



out to me the neat adjustments of the newly finished garment, her eyes blinked and snapped. She seemed a child of seven or eight, working herself up to declaration after declaration of virtue, urged on by a hunger for praise. The jacket was ingeniously made, and I said so. She wagged her head with childish elation.

I had been conscious, as she flowed on and on, of the flawless neatness and freshness of her dress, her hair, her shoes, and, to my vexation, I said that I was sure her taste in dress could never be at fault. She loosed a little fluttering gasp, and her voice became a mere breath of virtue, as she murmured, '*J'aime l'ordre.*'

I wanted to go to my room and get away from her kaleidoscopic posturing, but I sat silent before her. She suddenly assumed a rallying air and said, 'It is rare that we see an Englishwoman as elegant as Madame. Most are like Miss Cunningham, in flat heels and wool. Why are Englishwomen always cold? Of course, with Miss Cunningham, it is age. She says she is thirty-eight, but she must be sixty. What age do you think her?' She asked me so suddenly, that I felt muddled, vexed at knowing so little how to deal with her. I said that Miss Cunningham must know her age.

Mademoiselle Béraud instantly looked worn, wan with life's sadness. 'But Miss Cunningham is insane.' And she sighed. 'Nothing else could account for her thinking she was being believed. I always remember her in my prayers. Do you think it is dangerous to have her in the house? Will she become suddenly violent?'

'No,' I cried, rising so quickly that I dropped my book on the floor. Mademoiselle Béraud picked it up for me and rose too, as though no signal of courtesy that I gave would ever fail to be answered by her. She stood directly in front of me, so that I was penned into the

corner. She shook her head and looked old on purpose. It washed like a wave over her face. 'Poor little thing,' she murmured, 'I wish she would not go out so much. She looks so tired. In bed, madame, if you could see her in bed! One could not imagine how old she is! I nursed her last winter when she was very ill. I changed her hot water bottle twice during the night for a whole week, poor little thing.'

I believed her about the nursing, and she showed compassion so thoroughly that I did it too. Mademoiselle saw this, and again she was a good child, complacent with virtue. I felt that perhaps she *was* a good child, perhaps she was all the things she had been that evening, none making the others impossible. In quick succession she had been cruel, vain, kind, venomous, childish, sad. I must fleetingly have given myself away in my eyes, for Mademoiselle Béraud now dabbed hers with her handkerchief, and she did it beautifully, simply and without constraint. Then after blowing her nose with a deft lightness, she took my hand, said 'good night' with the quietness of a person whose emotion makes them wish to be alone, and I left the salon at last, dismissed by her at the moment she had quieted my feeling of criticism.

I found next day's luncheon very trying, for all through it Mademoiselle Béraud baited Miss Cunningham. With delicate cruelty, she caught her, held her, let her go, and softly pounced again. Miss Cunningham, with mouselike despair, remained still, or made tiny darts towards the shelter of bigger lies, but was always enclosed again in the Frenchwomen's veiled scepticism.

Miss Cunningham was called to the telephone and did not return to finish the small piece of pastry left on her plate. Mademoiselle insisted that it be kept hot for her, and finally, after a great deal of fuss, had it sent to her

room. When this had been done, she seemed for a moment without employment, until she began to tell of a ball to which she had been on Thursday, and of a villa that had been offered to her at Nice. I felt that she was inventing rather than lying, and if it had to be called lying, then it was the artistic kind; not the lying from necessity of Miss Cunningham.

She seemed to me to grow intoxicated with her skill. The others stopped talking and listened to her. She told of seeing the husband of one of her friends waiting outside a shop. She knew by his way of returning her greeting that he was not waiting for his wife. She stopped and spoke to him, asking after Madame's health, and protesting that she too would wait until Madame had finished her shopping and joined them. He begged her not to, he had just felt a drop of rain. She insisted, but soon pleaded faintness and asked for his arm. Finally, she said she would have to ask him to see her home, as she was really indisposed. He suggested that he put her in a taxi, but she declared she was not well enough to be left alone, and made him take her to her very door.

Everyone laughed.

Mademoiselle Béraud rose, holding her head bowed with a grotesque mock modesty. There was no reason why all she had said might not be true: only I *knew* it wasn't. I had seen her aware of her inventive fertility; I told myself, it was my presence that made her show off so eagerly; I was a newcomer, and could be impressed. Doubtless her baiting of Miss Cunningham was an old performance, freshened up a little upon a new arrival's appearance in the *pension*.

I refused to play audience.

I asked if I might change my place at table. Madame regretted. The two young girls next to her had been

confided to her charge, and must sit beside her. The Dutch couple next to them had been with her for four years, and would leave if their places were changed. The family of Danes were too large a group to be moved easily.

So I went down to dinner that evening with an apprehension of discomfort.

I had hardly unfolded my napkin before Miss Cunningham began telling what a horsewoman she had once been. She had easily controlled horses of the vilest temper. She would only take the highest jumps. Her every word served to dispirit or anger me, I could not be sure which. Why must she lie as much as that? If believing would ease her, I was ready to believe anything.

I asked her if *La Bohème* had been well sung, and commented on her fondness for music. This made her tell me that she had been trained for opera and hers would have been one of the great voices of the world, only her teachers had had the wrong methods. Actually her voice had been ruined. It had almost killed her. What she said left me abashed. Perhaps if I behaved as if I thought it true, she would somehow be fortified. Perhaps she lied from embarrassment at not having gifts; she could not face being an unimportant little woman. It argued a sensitive modesty, and something gallant, for there was a boldness about what she felt she ought to be. I remembered now that the day of my arrival I had heard her telling that nothing but her weak heart prevented her doing the twenty-two foot dive at the baths. What standards she set for herself!

I leaned across the table to speak my pity for her lost voice. She laughed, then drawled lightly, 'Of course, my real work in life is writing. My friends think it a tragic shame that I have given it up. But what is the use?

The neuritis in my arm is so bad that I can barely hold a pen!

I could feel Mademoiselle Béraud's eyes boring into me, but I continued to look at Miss Cunningham. I was at a loss what to say this time, but I hoped I looked as if she were being convincing. Mademoiselle Béraud used my silence to breathe softly, 'You must let me massage your arm; perhaps so I could help you to write.'

Imperturbable, Miss Cunningham answered in a lazy voice, 'Oh, thank you, but I couldn't bear to have it touched.'

I was glad Mademoiselle Béraud had been foiled. All my support in the unequal battle between them went to Miss Cunningham.

Mademoiselle's dark eyes grew glazed as she said, 'What luck your neuritis does not prevent you from doing so much of your washing!'

I had noticed once, through Miss Cunningham's open door, a great many gloves and handkerchiefs and other small articles drying in front of her stove; it must have been a similar sight that Mademoiselle Béraud had in mind. I felt myself drawn to the rescue. I said, 'That is what is so vexing about neuritis. One can do some things, but not others. Is it not so, Miss Cunningham?'

She agreed with an off-hand nod, and just then I realized that for some moments I had not looked at Mademoiselle Béraud — purely for my own protection — and it had the effect of making her restive. I continued to talk to Miss Cunningham, and began to include people on either side of me. I dropped my eyes and lifted them to Mademoiselle Béraud's right, I dropped them again, then lifted them to her left; she became silent, she drooped. I knew that if I had glanced at her, I should

have seen her looking like a clever little girl who is unexpectedly ignored.

Everyone was talking now, telling of their struggles with the vulture-like old women who claim one's wraps at the Opera. We were all laughing, amused — except Mademoiselle Béraud. Out of the corner of my eye I saw her cock her head first on one side, then on the other, assume a pious expression; twice I heard her sigh. She sat with her hands folded in her lap. I was surprised that such a brief ignoring of her should have so marked an effect. She was abject, lost. Surely she would rally. Perhaps she would subject Miss Cunningham to something more diabolical than ever.

As we rose, I felt a little uneasy. I must not stay in the salon. Should I go to my room or to a theatre? Then Mademoiselle Béraud came round the end of the table towards me, with theatre tickets in her hand, and an expression of lofty formality. I saw that I was to be invited to spend the evening with her. In absolute panic, I touched Miss Cunningham on the arm and said, 'Won't you come to my room, and let me show you some books that I bought to-day?'

She said she worshipped books, and we left the room together. Going upstairs, I felt a fool. I had created a difficult situation and I had no idea what was to be done about it. We sat in front of my stove, and I showed her my books, and we chattered away at cross-purposes, I abandoning my sentences when begun, and she limiting herself to little ejaculations, 'Charming, simply charming!'

I put my books to one side, flattened by having shown them, and we sat staring at the enamelled stove, our silence growing awkward. Then Miss Cunningham gave a little laugh, and began tentatively, 'I feel I really ought to warn you about Mademoiselle Béraud. I hate to have

to say it, but I think you should be told — she does not speak the truth.'

'Oh,' I said.

'You must not believe anything she says. I hear that after I left the table to-day, she told of being at a ball on Thursday. Well, I saw her sitting in a restaurant at ten, drinking a *vin chaud*.'

'Oh,' I said again. Then I laughed, and my laugh startled me. I said, 'Lying is very diverting; it's a puzzle to me why we so often speak the truth.' Miss Cunningham laughed too, rather shrilly, and as we stared at four pieces of bright mica, I felt we were mad.

I shivered nervously. I stretched out my hand for a box of sweet biscuits, and offered them to her. We sat nibbling biscuits, and still looking stupidly at the stove, and I wondered what good sound would finally break the silence.

Miss Cunningham laughed again. It made me jump. 'You are such an understanding person,' she began, 'that I can tell you what I would never think of telling anyone else. It was my own fault that I did not do more with my great talents.'

I winced, and waited. What if she were going to speak the truth?

'The fact is,' she went on, 'the year I was presented at Court I created such a furore, that just when I should have been working my hardest, I was turning people's heads instead.'

'Oh,' I breathed, and it made no sound.

'And then we travelled a great deal,' she continued, 'I've been presented at every Court in Europe.'

My eyes grew hot and I feared they would fill with tears. I wanted to put out my hand and say, 'You seem to me a dear, and determined, and — and all right, but

whatever makes you have to say all these things?' I pursed my mouth and nodded.

She next spoke of her father, and her voice sounded younger and more natural. 'Such an odd thing,' she mused, 'I haven't thought of it for years. I wonder what made it come into my head now. My father punished me once, and pretty soundly too. It must have been the only time, for he adored me. What do you suppose it was for?'

'I don't know,' I answered.

'For lying,' she said, and darted her eyes at me.

I looked away quickly.

'Isn't it absurd what children will do?' she laughed, 'And me of all people. I don't suppose I've told a lie since, and I was six then — thirty-two years ago.' She caught her breath, as though she had touched something hot and not been burnt.

She chatted a little longer of her brothers and told what a remarkable shot they had always thought her. Then presently she rose to go, and when the door had closed behind her the tears rolled down my cheeks. I stood in the middle of the floor, unable to sit again before that enamelled stove. I glanced at my books, but I had no wish to read. I thought, 'Well, I can't stand here all night feeling broken-hearted.' I walked to the *armoire* and began packing.

As I folded my dresses I knew I was being a coward. But I went on packing.

Very early the next morning I left the *pension*.



## Ordeal

BY DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON

(From *The Window*)

WHEN the taxi stopped, Agatha jumped out and gave the man money, evidently held ready in her hand all the way, and probably too much, to avoid a halt.

And when the lady in charge of the office asked if she were to send any telegrams, Agatha lost her head and stumbled over the address. Fan saw clearly then into her mind the images it had held while she had talked so glibly in the cab.

In the hall she was even more unnerving. Really, it was hopeless of her, just before her farewell hug, to let her eyes stray and find a nurse happening to pass, and recoil. Result of her recent too strenuous mental exercise. Truly it was a blessing she was not coming upstairs. . . .

Before Fan could recover from the spectacle of Agatha departing, to suffer all that her simple imagination and her inarticulateness in combination could force upon her, the lady-in-charge caught her with a remark to which she responded almost in Agatha's own manner; rushing wastefully outside herself into an obedient caricature of the speaker: in this case brusque and preoccupied, the fashion of one with mind alert and eyes all round the head. And was obliged, since the maid appearing at her side to take her suitcase had been a witness, to keep to this manner when she stepped out of the lift almost into the arms of a tall sister behind whom was waiting a short nurse.

She felt herself a guest being passed from hand to hand without release — being entertained. And indeed, for a moment, by each fresh face and fresh immediately revealed personality she *was* entertained. But she could not flatter herself into believing that these entertaining officials were themselves entertained. For them each visible hair of her head did not, as did theirs for her, stand out, a single separate mystery. If they felt anything at all it was relief, in finding that No. 7 had at her disposal as much manner as they. Their planned continuous engagement of her attention was very 'psychological' — horribly wise, feminine. It had created for her a miniature past in this house, and when presently she was shut up alone in her room, undressing, she did not feel a stranger there. The room had stated itself while she was talking with the sister and nurse, and was now a known room. It seemed long ago that Agatha had gone away through the hall.

She had thought in advance that her sense of personal life must cease when she entered the door of the nursing home. But instead it was intensified, as if, brought up against a barrier from behind which no certain future poured into it, her life flowed back upon itself, embarrassing her with its vivid palpitation. Her known self, arrested thus, was making all its statements at once. The most welcome was its cheerfulness, inexplicable, and as little expected as the wise-seeming state of composure that had risen unsummoned during the last two days, like a veil between herself and her knowledge by her lack of courage. That was negative, acceptance of the inevitable. But there was nothing negative in this deep, good cheer that made her smile as she hung up her garments in a wardrobe, perhaps for the last time. It was not stoicism. It might be unconscious organic

certainty of getting through. In her unconscious mind was no certainty but that of the life-risk. Perhaps that itself was the invigorating factor. Whatever its cause, this present intensity of being made the possible future look like a shallow expanse; something very easy to sacrifice if she considered only herself. And those others out in life seemed now to call for solicitude only because they did not know how strange was the being in which they were immersed.

Very carefully she arranged her hair, firmly putting in extra pins, being back (while she did so) within the final moments of arranging herself for parties in her girlhood. And all the time the lugubrious thoughts and anticipations belonging to the occasion, and so fertile in her mind a week ago, seemed hovering in the background seeking in vain for space to intervene.

The short nurse brought the cup of thin soup that was breakfast and lunch, left hurriedly, promising to come back in a moment, and came, with her already so well-known way of opening the door — a quiet, wide flourish that showed the whole of her at once, arm outstretched by hand holding door-knob.

They were all trained of course, Fan reflected, not to sneak into rooms: 'Open the door wide, *so*, come in through the centre of the doorway and face at once *towards* the patient, close the door quietly behind you and advance, making a cheerful remark.'

'Well? How are we?' the nurse had said, and paused in the middle of the room as if offering herself only as a momentary spectacle.

'Quite happy for the present. Are you going to stay with me for a bit?'

'I can't,' she said. 'I've got to attend to No. 8,' and perceived the tray and came forward to take it.

'You've got to sleep now, till I come for you at five.' This, then, was farewell to humanity on this side of the barrier. Fan asked leave to smoke — a single cigarette. While giving permission the nurse got herself to the door and away, as if hurriedly, as if driven; and in a moment Fan heard her voice asking cheerful questions in the next room. The replies came in a moaning monotone.

There was chattering in an open-doored room near by. Dining-room, common-room of nurses on duty on this floor of the great house where they earned their livings amidst pain and death. Whirring of the lift. Footsteps. Gushing of water into a basin. Swift rinsing; more gushing of water.

The sounds brought vivid images that ought, she felt, to be shocking, and rousing her to resist their suggestive power. But they passed through her mind without attaining her. Between them and the centre of her attention was something that had been waiting within the quietude of the room for its moment. Approaching now, as she sat back against the raised pillows and set down her book, with the note for Tom sticking out of it like a book-marker, on the table at her side with cigarette case and matches, these things seemed the preliminaries to an interview.

A week ago, this moment of being left alone to wait for the summons had drawn her forward into itself and kept her there. She recalled the shock of finding the life all about her no longer her concern, the cold dry horror of the prospect of getting through the days and playing her part. And how at times with an effort she had forced herself out of her trance, dropping her own cancelled life, and felt each life about her, sharply, disinterestedly, seeing each one in its singleness to be equally significant; been aware of a strange, sure wisdom within her that

seemed capable of administering the affairs of everyone she knew, guiding each life without offence—had realized at one moment with an overwhelming clarity how it is that the character of an individual operates more securely, upon those who have known him, after he is dead. But for the last two days she had longed for this moment and the relief it would bring.

It was like being in great open spaces, in solitude. She rejoiced that she had decided not to tell Tom. This strange, familiar intimation all about her owed the power that was about to overwhelm her to her undivided solitude. Agatha, going, had gone utterly. If Tom had known, his suffering presence would have been in the room with her. She was severed even from Tom. With a deep, blissful sigh she felt all the tensions of her life relax. She was back again in the freedom of her own identity, in pre-marriage freedom, in more than childhood's freedom, with all the strength of her maturity to savour its joy. In bright daylight the afternoon lay before her, endless—*the first holiday of her adult life. . . .*

Laughing softly and luxuriously, beside herself with the joy of complete return, she looked gratefully about at the features of the ugly, barely furnished room and lit the permitted cigarette. The act of smoking threw her back to the minute before last. It was occupation, distraction, waste of priceless opportunity—of time? No, of something that was more than time! It was cutting her off from her deep life. It was unnecessary, because now she was back in her pre-smoking state of existence, and it had brought her to the present surface of life, away from the state of being into which she had just plunged. She crushed the burning end upon the matchbox. The edge of that first blissful expansion was blunted, but the fruit of its moments lay in her thoughts and in her refreshed, delighted limbs,

and in her recognition of the way the hint of tobacco smoke upon the air enhanced the familiar, remembered, surrounding freshness that was like that of a dewy garden in the early morning. All about her, emanating from her relaxed mind, was all the garden and countryside beauty she had ever known, its concentrated essence; so that what she saw was not any single distinct scene, but a hovering and mingling of them all — their visible spirit which was one with her own.

If this blissful state were the gift of the holiday from responsibility and from the tension of human relationships that only the chance of death had had the power to give her, then perhaps the perfect certainty of death must always bring it at the last. People who were engaged in doing their dying were enjoying, behind even the most awful of the outward appearances, at the end of the exciting absorbing struggle that prevented them from communicating their thoughts, the sense of being in its perfect fullness. . . .



She put down the book to question, as if it were a person with her in the room, the fact that she had forgotten, in the intensity of her absorption in *Green Mansions*, what lay ahead. The experience had been a fresh voyage of discovery into unchanged, underlying, timeless reality.

But with the book lying there closed, the sense of passing time came back. Her watch said half-past four. In half-an-hour. . . .

The door opened upon the sister almost ostentatiously displaying a hypodermic syringe. What hospital trick was this, sprung without warning?

'Your nurse is in the theatre, so I've come for this little job.'

'What little job? What's the mystery in the syringe?'

'No mystery,' smiled the sister, slipping the jacket from Fan's arm. 'We always give this before the theatre.'

'Theatre, theatre, theatre,' absurd unsuitable word for the reality now near at hand and to remain, excluding all else for half an hour — an eternity — after the sister had gone.

'It prevents bleeding,' said the steady, lying voice below eyes that looked serenely through the window as the syringe pricked home.

'I'd have gone quietly,' said Fan resentfully.

'I daresay you would. But now you'll be happy for a quarter of an hour before nurse comes.' She spoke sternly, but finished with a smile—the gleeful smile of one who outwits a naughty child. Brush, between two women. Managers? All women are managers. That's why they daren't give in to each other. That's why . . . The nurse had gone. A quarter of an hour. Watch slow. This was some kind of drug. Stupefier. *Very* psychological. But that's why, I was saying. . . . Thoughts would not come.

Her effort to call up a picture of the theatre brought only a confused sliding together of images in a mind that could not hold them. Oh, *very* psychological. Perhaps they were wise. She could not decide. Would have liked to go down in full possession of all her senses, yet was grateful for this not unpleasant numbness.

With the nurse at her side she was walking down a shallow flight of stairs. Towards death . . . life? At the bottom of the stairs was another nurse, who greeted her as she passed, and whose greeting she returned. A turning to the left, another nurse in the offing, standing like a sentry at an open door, who also said 'Good afternoon' and had to be answered. This was the theatre. Not yet quite. A corridor leading to the theatre's arched

doorway, but giving no vista. The nurse was behind now. She was going forward alone, quite clear-headed and very matter-of-fact, not needing this careful passing from hand to hand. . . . In the doorway she was greeted by yet another nurse standing away to the right, leading her on with her dreadful 'Good afternoon.' Oh, *too* psychological. Farcical. She was round the bend. Here it was, the lofty room, the white-clad forms, high windows open, no smell of anæsthetic or of disinfectant. Trees beyond the window.

Which still she could see as she lay — belonging completing.

'Breathe quite naturally, Mrs. Peele.'

Fresh and powerful came the volatile essences, playing in the air before her nostrils like a fountain. Her heart answered, her blood answered; but not herself. Desperately and quite independently her threatened heart fought against this power that was bearing her down. She raised her hands to still it.

'Clasp your hands.'

All of herself was in her clasped hands, beating, throbbing. Less, and less, and . . . less . . .



## *The Poet*

BY V. SACKVILLE-WEST

(From *Life and Letters*)

I FIRST saw him sitting at a little table outside a café in Italy. He was alone, and I knew him instantly for a poet, by his wild eyes, his tumbled hair, his sensitive nostrils, and his weak but beautiful mouth. He wore a faded blue shirt and a pair of blue linen trousers, with his bare feet thrust into heelless *espadrilles*. At the moment when my eyes first fell upon him he was gazing sorrowfully into a glass of beer. I imagined that in those translucent amber depths he sought, perhaps, some simile for a mermaid's hair — the café was situated on the shores of the Mediterranean — but after a prolonged contemplation he beckoned to the waiter and said in Italian: 'There's a fly in this beer. Take it away.'

I was disappointed. I had been so certain he was a poet and that he was English. His appearance was so romantic, the lonely fishing-village was so romantic, too, just the place for a poet, with its little harbour and the painted boats swaying softly on the dark green water, and the Mediterranean beyond, and the fishermen's houses in a semicircle, the colour of tea roses and tulips, and the nets hung out to dry, and the lovely hills rising behind, silvery with the olive trees. Now it seemed that he was a native, a peasant, perhaps, come down from the hills to catch the evening coolness of the port, come to drink his glass before climbing back to bed: a native, a peasant, unlettered, and a materialist into the bargain. As I watched him, he rose, and slouching away he vanished

through a little green door into a neighbouring house. I heard him coughing as he went.

On the following evening I saw him again in the same place. His glass of beer stood beside him, his elbow was propped on the table, his cheek propped on his hand, and he was reading in a small book bound in calf, the pages slightly foxed. I passed behind him, and looked over his shoulder. He was reading Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, in a seventeenth-century edition. My spirits revived. I felt that my assumption had been justified.

As I sat down at another table and ordered my vermouth and selz, unfolding my *Daily Mail* meanwhile rather ostentatiously, I felt rather than saw that he had raised his head and was glancing in my direction. I bided my time, paying no attention. Presently I heard, as I had known I would hear, the scraping of his chair on the tiled floor. He was edging himself towards me. He wanted to enter into conversation. I cursed myself for a brute as I heard his first apologetic cough develop into a terrible, a heartrending attack of coughing. I flung my *Daily Mail* aside, and hastily poured him out a glass of water. 'By God, you're ill,' I said.

He put his handkerchief to his lips and brought it away stained with red. 'Ill?' he said, and stretched a shaking hand. 'There's death in that hand,' he said with a twisted smile.

That jarred me. I had dramatized him to myself, heaven knows, but that he should dramatize himself was more than I could bear. I was divided between distress at his ill-health and disgust at his exploitation of it. In consequence I spoke rather briskly, asking him what ailed him — though it was clear enough.

He was ready to talk. He hadn't spoken his own lan-

guage for three months, he told me. He had come to Santa Caterina to die. He thought it couldn't be long now, but he didn't mind: he didn't care for life, so long as it gave him time to accomplish that which he must accomplish. He thought he had done his best by now, and was quite ready to go.

And what, I asked, was he so anxious to accomplish?

'I write poetry,' he said, quite simply this time.

He was twenty-five years of age, he told me, and his name was Nicholas Lambarde. That seemed to me a good name for an English poet, in the tradition of Kit Marlowe, Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, and the rest. English poets had nearly always been endowed with good names, and Nicholas Lambarde might figure as honestly in an alphabetical index as the others. But, although I keep an eye on poetry, I had never heard of him. A mere name was not enough to make me take him on trust. What poetry, I asked, had he written? Had any of it been published?

No, he said, he had never bothered about publication. He cared nothing about contemporary fame. Posterity was the only thing that counted, and about posterity he had no doubt at all. He began then to talk of his poetry, dashing his hands through his hair; he talked extravagantly, lyrically; but somehow — although sceptical, I think, by nature, and not readily impressed — I couldn't feel that he was boasting in a void, or that the claims he made were in any way in excess of their justification. I couldn't explain to myself why he thus immediately convinced me. Perhaps his very scorn for present fame did its part, a scorn so rare and so manifestly genuine. At any rate when he told me that he had that morning written a real poem, a true contribution to English literature, I

believed him. And, in a way, as my story will show, I was right. He had.

He held very definite and vigorous views about poetry. He couldn't abide the modern school of *défaitisme* and despair. He couldn't feel — dying man though he was — that life was little more than the sloughed skin of a snake, or a rustle of dry leaves, or a parched land without water, or whatever the metaphor might be. Nor did he feel that poetry was the proper vehicle for metaphysics, any more than fiction was the proper vehicle for propaganda, sexual or sociological. He held that poetry ought to spring from its own soil, and break freely into leaves like a tree, with a suggestion of sky above and of roots beneath, drinking deeply in the earth. He believed profoundly in the technique of the craft, and held that the first use of technique was to suggest, by association, far greater riches than actually stated by the words. In fact, rapturously though he expressed himself, he displayed a considered judgment and talked a great deal of sense.

He never read poetry nowadays, he said, for fear of being influenced, though, of course, he had read through the whole of English literature in his early youth.

Every now and then he broke off to cough and to dab his handkerchief against his mouth.

Well, I stayed on at Santa Caterina. Nicholas Lambarde, invisible in the daytime, appeared regularly every evening at the café, ordered his glass of beer, joined me at my table, and talked poetry to me, while the stars came out and the lights of the harbour dropped their plummets into the water. I watched him growing a little paler, a little thinner every day. His fits of coughing became more frequent and more violent. Still, when I exhorted him, he impatiently brushed aside my importunity and went on with what he was saying. The only important thing in the

world to him was poetry. Death did not matter, health did not matter, nor time, nor fame, nor money: I never met anyone who lived so intensely or so continuously the life of the spirit. I can see him now, with his burning eyes, his unshaven chin cupped in his hands, and the stained handkerchief crumpled between his fingers, leaning across the table, talking, talking.

One evening he said that he would like to ask me a favour. He had no friends and no relations, he said, and the only thing which bothered him was the disposal of his manuscripts after he was dead. He had thought of consigning them all to a literary agency, but that seemed an insecure thing to do, for who could guarantee that any literary agency would find him a publisher? Poetry did not pay — he knew that — and he feared that the eventual fate of his poems might be the waste-paper basket. On the one hand, you see, he was curiously sane. On the other, he was absolutely confident that in, say, a hundred years' time he would be recognized as the head of English song. He made a possible exception in favour of Shakespeare, but admitted no other rivals—if, that is to say, he had his chance, and that must be my business. In short, he asked me to act as his literary executor.

Of course, I accepted. No one could have refused him, and I was, as you may imagine, consumed with the desire to read these poems of which I had heard so much. Often though I urged him, he would never show me a line, but putting on an expression at once arrogant and secretive, would reply: 'All in good time! You'll see, you'll see.'

It was on a morning in early May that a fisher-boy came breathlessly to find me, saying that the Englishman had died during the night: would I please come at once? I had never before penetrated into Lambarde's lodging, and it

was with an uncomfortable sense of intrusion that I mounted the rickety stairs and stood upon the threshold of his room. I had not expected to find him surrounded by many possessions, but neither had I been prepared for such utter barrenness and poverty. He himself lay upon, not in, the bed, dressed as usual in his faded shirt and trousers, as though he had flung himself down in the last fatal access of coughing — for the sheets and counterpane were stained with a deeper flood than ever his pitiable handkerchief. One glance round gave me the complete inventory of the room. A pair of brushes, a comb, a razor; a bunch of wild jonquils stuck in a bottle, some shoes, a few books, mostly tattered. That was all I could see. But there were papers everywhere — strewn over the bed, over the one table, and even over the floor — separate sheets of foolscap, some closely covered, some scrawled with but a single line, tossed aside, blown by the breeze into some neglected corner. His landlady, who had followed me upstairs, doubtless thought that she read criticism in my glance.

He would never allow her to tidy, she said; sometimes for weeks together he had locked the door and she had been unable to enter his room; and once, when she had ventured to pick up some of his papers and place them on the table, he had flown into the most terrible rage, so that she thought he would expire on the spot. It was comprehensible, she said, with the Latin peasant's understanding of the artist: the poor young man was a poet, and poets were cursed with that kind of temperament; one could not expect a stag to browse mildly like a cow. And she looked at him, lying upon the bed, with a compassion that forgave him all his trespasses.

But now he could prevent nobody from picking up his papers and arranging them on the table. It was, indeed,

precisely what he had asked me to do, yet I did it with a sense of guilt, induced, no doubt, by my own knowledge of my own curiosity. Outwardly I was executing the wishes of a dead compatriot: in reality, I was gratifying the meanest of our instincts. Yet why should I blacken myself unduly? I love letters, I respect genius; I had lent a sympathetic ear to an unknown poet for weeks past; I had upset all my plans on his account. It was only fair that I should have my reward.

And yet, I swear, it wasn't only my reward that I thought of — the reward of discovering a new master of English verse. I honestly wanted to do my best by that proud, lonely, flaming creature who had lived for nothing but his art.

I persuaded the good wife to leave me, and, alone with the dead man, I fell to my task. You must believe me when I say that I have seldom been more excited. At first I was puzzled, for many of the writings were so exceedingly fragmentary; there were scraps of scenes from plays, whose characters bore names in the Elizabethan tradition — Baldassare, Mercurio, and the like; there were a few verses of what appeared to be a ballad; there were some ribald addresses to Chloe and Dorinda; there was the beginning of a contemplative poem on Solitude. I fancied from all these that he had been practising his hand at the art of parody, for he had hit off the Elizabethan manner exactly, and the manner of the ballads, and of the Restoration, and of the early nineteenth century. Whatever else he had been, he was certainly a skilful parodist; I was sure that I had read something very like his play-scenes in some minor work of Kyd or Shirley, I couldn't remember which. But I turned over his poor papers impatiently, in the hope of coming on one of those poems of which he had said to me, 'Lord! I'm





And there were other passages which had worried him considerably:

But after me I seem to hear  
The wheels of Time                      near

A fiery spirit              ? bright              and swift

The Earth like Danae  
Like Danae the Earth  
Under the stars the Earth like Danae lies.

But he had got that right, too, nearly the whole of it, except one line, for which he had left a blank.

I sat back and stared at his papers. What had gone wrong in that poor muddled brain? What fantastic trick had memory played upon him? I remembered how he had told me that he had quite given up reading the poets now, 'for fear of being influenced,' though he had read them extensively as a boy. Influenced, indeed! The irony of it!

And yet, you know, I still maintain that a poet was lost in him. I found among his papers one sonnet, which, with the obvious though partial exception of the first line, I have so far been unable to trace to anybody else. It is not the kind of poetry which brought him downstairs to tell me that he had done something 'really good'; it is, indeed, only a sonnet of a type which could be turned out in dozens by any competent rhymester, soaked in the conventions of English literature; the octet may pass muster, but the sestet is poor, as though scribbled down in a hurry; and probably I exaggerate the merit of the whole, being privy to the absolute truth which inspired it; but such as it is it may very well stand as his epitaph:

When I am gone, say only this of me:  
He scorned the laurels and the praise of men,  
Alien to fortune and to fame; but then  
Add this: he plunged with Thetis in the sea;  
Lay naked with Diana in the shade;  
He knew what paths the wandering planets drew;  
He heard the music of the winds; he knew  
What songs the sirens sang; Arion played.

Say this; no more; but when the shadows lengthen  
Across the greensward of your cloistered turf,  
Remember one who felt his sinews strengthen  
And tuned his hearing by the line of surf.

One who, too proud, passed ease and comfort by,  
But learned from Rome and Hesiod how to die.

## *Mrs. Raeburn's Waxwork*

BY LADY ELEANOR SMITH

(From *The London Mercury*)

THE rain, which had poured with a pitiless ferocity for so long upon the chimneys and roofs of the great manufacturing city, seemed at length to enclose the whole town within towering prison-walls of burnished steel. It was now afternoon; the short winter day was nearly over, and it had rained thus from dawn, would probably continue to rain throughout the night. A dark, wet dusk began to envelop the city like a sable blanket; the street-lamps sprang into life, looming ahead like the ghosts of drowned and weary daffodils, casting watery and trembling reflections upon the shining rivers that were pavements. There were few people walking the mournful streets and those there were had to struggle and batter their way through sharp gusts of wind, bent double beneath dripping and top-heavy umbrellas.

Such a one was Patrick Lamb, and so great was his hurry that more than once as he stumbled over an unperceived kerb he ran the risk of entangling both himself and his umbrella in the foaming, muddy torrents of the gutters beneath his feet. He had every reason to hurry; he was on his way to apply for a job, and he feared that unless he hastened, he would be too late to secure this vacancy which meant so much to him.

Turning at last into a dark and narrow street he saw opposite to him a ramshackle building of yellow brick, from the roof of which swelled forth a glass dome encrusted with the dirt and soot of ages. A flight of shallow

steps led to a swing door. This was his destination.

He flung open the door and was immediately confronted by a turnstile, near which sat a seedy-looking man in an ill-fitting uniform not unlike that of a fireman.

'Sixpence, please,' said the man, and whistled through his teeth.

Patrick Lamb shook his head.

'No. . . . I'm not a visitor. I have an appointment with Mr. Mugivan, the manager.'

'Ah — ha,' said the attendant knowingly, and showed him into a tiny slice of a room filled with papers, files, account-books and dust. Here sat Mr. Mugivan, a fat, podgy man with thick legs and a face like a tomato.

'Good afternoon,' said Patrick Lamb, hesitatingly, 'I hear that you have a vacancy here for an — an attendant.'

Mr. Mugivan stared for a moment at the young man's sallow, rather long face, at his deep-set grey eyes and slender, puny body.

'Who told you so?'

'My landlady, in Bury Street. She knew the last man you had here.'

'And what made you come?'

'Necessity. I'm in need of work. I was stranded here a week ago with a theatrical company.'

There was a silence. Mr. Mugivan suddenly laughed, looking at his visitor rather defiantly with little red-rimmed eyes that were not unlike the eyes of a pig.

'Rather a come-down, isn't it, for an actor to find himself minding Mugivan's Waxworks?'

'That doesn't matter, sir. And, if you'll only let me, I'll mind them damn well.'

'It's long hours,' said the proprietor, still speaking contemptuously. 'Nine in the morning till seven at night. An hour for lunch and an hour for tea. Two pound a

week — and the attendant has to wear a uniform. An actor wouldn't fancy that, would he?'

'Maybe I'm not an actor,' said Patrick Lamb.

Mr. Mugivan spat upon the floor.

'I'll give you a trial, anyhow. What's your name?'

Patrick told him.

'Well, Lamb,' and the proprietor creaked himself out of his chair, revealing incidentally that he wore carpet-slippers and had bunions, 'come with me and I'll show you Mugivan's Beauties before you go. You can start to-morrow morning.'

Obediently Patrick followed his new employer through the turnstile which was swung round obligingly by the other attendant, down a narrow whitewashed tunnel into a large apartment.

'Ever seen figures before?' enquired Mr. Mugivan.

'Waxworks? Not since I was a kid.'

'Hall of Monarchs,' said Mr. Mugivan, sucking his teeth with a depreciating sound.

The room in which they found themselves was bare and vault-like; here, too, the walls were whitewashed; the floor was covered with a red drugget and in the middle of the room was placed a sofa upholstered in shabby crimson plush. Yet although bare the room was not empty, but crowded, crowded with a pale throng of mute and stiff and silent figures. They stood in groups, a dais to each group, and were protected from the public by a red cord which imprisoned them, like sheep in a pen, so that had they wished, they could not have strayed, but must for ever remain captive. There they stood, and would no doubt stand throughout the ages, these tinsel kings and queens, Plantagenets and Stuarts, Tudors and Hanoverians, calm and blank and dreadfully remote, pallid of cheek and glassy of eye, indifferent

to all who passed by to gape at them, a host of waxen princes, all dead, many of them forgotten, terribly isolated in their garish splendour, uncannily galvanized into a crude semblance of life that yet denied them even the elements of life, leaving them fixed, frozen and staring, while the dust thickened upon their cheap and fusty robes of purple and sham ermine.

Opposite the door through which they had come, was another door, leading to yet another chamber. Mr. Mugivan led the way.

'Curiosities and Horrors,' he explained carelessly. They passed through the second door.

Here was another room, a replica of the first, but more dimly lit, more melancholy even than the Hall of Monarchs since the illumination that winked upon this dreary scene was greenish, ghastly—such a light as might have been expected to proceed from a sconce of corpse-candles. Here were more massed ranks of still, impassive figures, paler, these, than the monarchs, in the dim grotto of their melancholy chamber, and more repellent, perhaps because their stiff, indifferent bodies were clothed in the garments of every day and borrowed no majesty from princes' robes, however sham. A skeleton gleamed white in one corner of the room; there was a stuffed ox with six legs, a tiny waxen midget, and a giant of local fame. Save for these the room was peopled only with men who had killed, and who had paid the penalty for killing. A throng staring before them, expressionless, rigid, mask-like, brooding, perhaps upon their crimes.

Mr. Mugivan seemed more at home in the second room. He became almost conversational.

'Here's Hopkins, the Norwich strangler. . . . Tracy, who shot a policeman. . . . John Joseph Gilmore, cut the throats of his wife and two children. . . .'

They moved across the room. Then, near the slit of a window, crossed by iron bars, Patrick saw her for the first time. She stood on a little dais by herself, a young woman, or rather the effigy of a young woman, dressed neatly in dark clothes that were already old-fashioned in cut. She carried herself proudly, like a queen, and whereas the other waxworks were completely expressionless of countenance, this one alone, with proudly-curling lips and short, imperious nose, seemed, he thought, actually to live, perhaps because she was Disdain incarnate. She stood there easily, gracefully—long, pale hands folded upon her breast, and Patrick, gazing, felt the cool, amused stare of her grey eyes. For a moment his heart leaped sharply, startling him, and he had a sudden impulse to move forward and look more closely at her; then this sensation was succeeded by a creeping feeling of curious discomfort. He was embarrassed; he had to avert his eyes.

'Who's that woman?' he asked impetuously, and then wished that he had not spoken.

Mr. Mugivan answered him casually, with his back turned to the effigy.

'That's Mrs. Raeburn, the poisoner . . . and that's the lot, so come on.'

'Mrs. Raeburn? I seem to know the name.'

'No doubt, no doubt. It was well enough known at one time.'

They walked away, towards the Hall of Monarchs, and Patrick was acutely conscious of the supercilious grey eyes that must be gazing after them. The sham eyes of a sham woman, a waxen effigy! He felt acutely ridiculous.

Mr. Mugivan said no more until they found themselves once again in the little office. Then, offering Patrick a cigarette, he asked suddenly;

'You're not a fanciful sort of chap by any chance?'

'Fanciful? You mean nervous? No, I can't say that I am. Why?'

'No place for fancies, this,' confided Mr. Mugivan, waving his hand in the direction of the Exhibition. 'It's a lonely sort of a job most of the time, and once you start thinking the figures is looking at you, well, you're done, that's all. Last chap we had here took to having fancies. That's why you've got this job.'

Patrick felt suddenly rebellious.

'I can safely say I shan't have fancies,' he said laughing. 'I may not be particularly brave, in fact I'm not, but I must say it would take more than a parcel of wax dolls to scare me.'

'Figures aren't dolls,' Mr. Mugivan corrected, shocked.

'Figures, then,' and he thought: 'Talking of figures, that woman, Mrs. Raeburn's got a good one.'

But neither he nor Mr. Mugivan mentioned the name of the woman poisoner aloud.

'Nine o'clock to-morrow, then,' said Mr. Mugivan.

'Nine o'clock to-morrow.'

And so they parted.

He discovered, the next day, two things about his new job. One was that his long and very often lonely vigil with the waxworks gave him at times the curious and eerie sensation of being buried alive in a vault filled with the dead; the other that, with the morning, Mrs. Raeburn, poisoner, had become once more a waxen effigy, and was no longer a living, breathing woman. This was comforting, yet in some strange way disappointing, for it was idle to deny that he had thought of her very frequently during the course of the night, and that the prospect of meeting once more the direct gaze of her rather mocking eyes had undoubtedly stimulated him



and sent him forth into the cheerless streets kindled with an eager, sparkling excitement which he rather half-heartedly strove to suppress.

As the morning dragged by he studied a catalogue of the exhibition, trying to memorize the many dossiers of princes and murderers. He was accustomed to learn by heart, and in three hours his task was almost complete, yet with one exception. A curious revulsion prevented him from reading, even to himself, the brief account in the catalogue of Mrs. Raeburn's crime, of discovering, through the medium of one cheap, smudged paragraph, that she had been an infamous woman, a monster of vice and cruelty. Taking a penknife from his pocket he cut away from his catalogue all record of her dark deeds. Yet she remained throughout the morning a lifeless effigy, and after glancing at her once, he gladly looked away.

He went out to lunch and returned for the long vigil of the afternoon. Few people came to visit the exhibition, a pair of school children in charge of a maiden aunt, two girls, who giggled and eyed him coyly, an old man, and an amorous couple who plainly regarded his presence as a nuisance.

It was foggy outside; dusk fell early. For the first time that day, as he paced the Hall of Monarchs, he became sensible of the loneliness of his position. Once again the feeling of being buried among the dead returned to him, intensified, this time by a bored and brooding melancholy, whereas in the morning there had also been a sense of adventure. The very tread of his feet, the only sound in the still apartment, smote lugubriously upon his ears. He would have liked to smoke, but this was, of course, forbidden.

At length he turned, and obeying an impulse which

was becoming every second stronger, he moved towards the further chamber, the Hall of Curiosities and Horrors. Here the twilight struck gloomily upon the wan and glimmering faces of the murderers, upturned to greet the first dark, smoky greyness of night; greenish they were once more, and dismal; and very hopeless in the blank resignation of their weary vigil in this dim room that was filled with the very breath of genteel decay.

He went straight towards the figure of Mrs. Raeburn, standing tall and quiet and erect on her dais below the barred window. He had never been so near to her before; their eyes met, and once more she had recaptured that spark of life which had so curiously impressed him on the previous day. He gazed for some moments at her pale, clear-cut face, at her direct, ironic eyes. She appeared to return his scrutiny gravely, earnestly, scornfully, yet with a glint of interest and humour in her regard. She seemed, he thought, a woman well used to curious eyes, well able to defend herself against the stares of the inquisitive. Suddenly, to his immense astonishment, he spoke to her, and his voice rang out strangely enough in that silent room.

'I wonder what have you done?' he asked her abruptly. 'For God's sake what can you have done that you should be here?'

There was a long pause, during the course of which he continued to examine her closely. Was it his imagination, or did her lips really curve; was there an answering twinkle in her eye? And then he turned sharply, for he had caught, or thought that he had caught, a soft, eager rustling sound from the throng of effigies behind his back. And suddenly he was saved, for two little boys came pattering in to visit the Curiosities and Horrors.

The next day saw him resolutely keeping to the Hall

of Monarchs. Here, with the lifeless dummies of long-dead kings, he was safe. In that other room he realized that he was in peril. And the day after, although he hungered for a glimpse of Mrs. Raeburn's pale face, he still remained aloof. The next day was Saturday, with a steady stream of patrons who would have made the dankest vault seem homely and prosaic. Then Sunday, a holiday.

On Monday he returned to the exhibition ready to laugh at himself for a morbid fool. The rain had stopped; a feeble ray of primrose sunshine, filtering through the barred window of the second chamber, made even Mrs. Raeburn seem little more than a cunningly fashioned doll of life size. And he had spoken to her, as though she were alive and could hear and understand him! He was disgusted with himself.

Yet, with the swiftly flowing dusk the murderers changed once more; assumed, as was their wont with the shades of night, the vivid and evil personalities they must have worn during their lifetime; seemed to stretch themselves, as though released from some long spell of immobility; nodded, perhaps, to one another — even winked; perhaps brushed the dust from their shabby garments, smothered yawns, and waited, quietly expectant, for the closing of the exhibition. So Patrick thought, but it was difficult to see, for the shadows were thick in this lost and forgotten room.

He went towards the effigy of Mrs. Raeburn and was not surprised to find that her eyes, alive and brilliant, almost feverish in their eager intensity, remained fixed direct upon him as though she waited to see whether he would, after his three days' absence, speak once more to her.

He was, however, silent. He stared at her proud and

beautiful mouth, at her long, pale hands, at the white stem of her throat and admitted to himself that he desired her. Yet he had no immediate wish to touch her, but only longed passionately for the stiff, waxen body of this effigy to melt and transform itself into warm, living flesh and blood. Somewhere, somehow, this miracle must be accomplished, for if he were unable to possess her he thought that, such was the spell she had cast upon him, he must inevitably pine and sicken, for she was *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and he was in her thrall. At last he spoke to her, softly, scarcely knowing that he spoke.

'You are a witch,' he said, 'and you possess me body and soul. You ought to be burnt, and since you are made of wax it should not be difficult to destroy you. . . . I have a good mind to try.'

This time there was no mistake; a gleam of sardonic laughter came to her eyes, a strange and elfin smile to her curling lips. She defied him. And, as before, the row of murderers behind seemed to move simultaneously with a rustling murmur of excitement. As before, too, he was saved by a footstep from the outer world. He turned sharply. A woman came into the room.

Patrick stiffened, became once more the respectful and vigilant attendant. The woman hesitated for a moment, then approached him slowly, for she was bent and squat and elderly and walked with the help of a stick. He noticed vaguely that she was dressed in dingy black, with a frowsy bonnet askew upon her head and a film of veil that partially concealed her face. He bent down politely.

'Yes, madam? Is there anything I can do?'

'There is,' said the old woman. Her voice was clear and decisive, the voice of one who is accustomed to command. 'I have stupidly neglected to buy a catalogue

at the door, and as I am old, and not so good a walker as I was, I wonder if you would save my going back by being kind enough to tell me something about the waxworks. These are murderers, are they not?’

Patrick, only too pleased to occupy his mind in this accustomed fashion, began mechanically.

‘Yes, madam. There on my right is Richard Sayers, the Scottish body-snatcher, who shot two men before he was arrested, and protested his innocence to the last. . . . Next to Sayers is Mugivan’s conception of Jack the Ripper, the criminal who was never captured . . . this figure is modelled according to the description of his appearance given to the police by those persons who protested that they had seen him before or after his appalling crimes. . . . Next to Jack the Ripper we have Landru. . . .’

But while his voice droned on he was dreading the moment when they must face Mrs. Raeburn, when he would look once more upon her pale, remote face and meet once again her steady, contemptuous gaze. He lingered beside the midget, the freakish ox, the local giant. The old woman listened to him attentively, beady eyes darting from beneath her heavy veil. Once or twice she asked him a question, but otherwise was silent, seeming pleasantly absorbed in this monotonous catalogue of grim and fiendish crimes. At last the moment dreaded by Patrick could be postponed no longer; at last they faced the figure of Mrs. Raeburn, standing slim and straight and self-possessed beneath the grated window. Suddenly Patrick remembered that he knew nothing of this murderess save that she had killed by poison; here he was speechless and could recite no bloodthirsty dossier nor did he even know her victim; only that she was young and fair and that she had cast a spell upon him, and these

things could not be told to his companion. There was a pause, during the course of which the old woman examined the wax figure attentively and in silence. At length he mumbled:

'This is Mrs. Raeburn . . . the poisoner.'

As he spoke he shot a sharp glance at the effigy and observed that she was blank and mask-like once more; indifferent both to him and his companion. His witch had again become a waxwork.

The old lady shuffled closer to the figure, peered with a certain attentive inquisitiveness, then turned to him and remarked critically:

'The likeness is not very good.'

He was startled, and gaped, unable quite to grasp the purport of her words.

He asked: 'You knew her?'

She did not answer him, but said still peering: 'She was taller, she had more dignity, more of an air. And I think she was wilder. But it's long ago,' and her face changed all the time.

He asked again, trembling, his hands clammy cold, his voice unconsciously menacing: 'You knew her?'

For the first time the old creature turned to look at him, seeming to observe him closely. She chuckled, and at first he thought that one of the waxworks had laughed, so ghostly, so unexpected, was this little bubbling sound in the quietness of the dim hall.

She said, still chuckling: 'I am Mrs. Raeburn.'

And as he did not answer she pulled back her veil. She was younger than he had at first supposed. She revealed a fat, gross, heavy-jowled face, sallow, unhealthy, with high Mongolian cheekbones. Her nose was squat and thick, her cheeks carved with two deep-cut lines running from her nostrils to the corners of her mouth.

Her little, sharp, grey eyes were almost buried in folds of flesh. Beneath the shoddy bonnet a strand of hair hung untidily; it was dyed a bright orange tint. This face, which leered forth so boldly at Patrick, was seamed and stamped with the marks of every foul and obscene vice; brazen, debauched, so brutal as to be three parts animal, it seemed to hang in the air, this gargoyle face, to gloat triumphantly upon his horror and confusion. Then, swiftly, the woman whisked back her veil and said crisply, in her clear and resonant voice:

'It didn't do me justice, your image.' Then in a moment she was gone, while behind her the effigy of Mrs. Raeburn, poisoner, remained standing cool and pale and remote upon her dais, all the paler, all the cooler, for being now the centre of a flood of cold and frozen moonlight.

Patrick fled after the old woman, not because he wished to see her again, but because (of the two of them) the waxen image had become the more repulsive, yet, when he reached the Hall of Monarchs, she had already disappeared.

He waited, sick and shivering, until the clock struck seven and the show shut down, then he went in search of Mr. Mugivan, whom he found in his office, reading an evening paper with his feet on his desk.

'Good evening,' said Patrick. 'I want to tell you something.'

Mr. Mugivan put down his paper.

'My word, young fellow, you look cheap. What is it now?'

Patrick, gulping, said: 'Do you know who's been here this afternoon?'

'I do not,' said Mr. Mugivan. 'I'm proprietor of a waxwork-show, not a magician. Who has been here?'

'Mrs. Raeburn. The real Mrs. Raeburn. She came to see her waxwork. She's just gone.'

As Mr. Mugivan gaped, his red face became curiously mottled — white and purple in patches, Patrick noticed dispassionately.

'Mrs. Raeburn?'

'Yes.'

Mr. Mugivan climbed laboriously from his chair.

'Mrs. Raeburn, eh? Somebody's been pulling your leg. You don't know your catalogue, either. Mrs. Raeburn, indeed?'

And he pulled a document from the untidy desk, licked his thumb, and flipped over a page.

'Mrs. Raeburn,' he said, speaking very loud and not looking at Patrick, 'was scragged, hanged, you understand, hanged by the neck for the murder of her husband more than twenty years ago. That being so, you could hardly have seen her here just now. And that's enough of your funny stuff for one day.'

Patrick said nothing. There was really nothing to say. Nor did Mr. Mugivan break the silence, but waddled to and fro about the little room, changing his carpet slippers for boots, struggling into his overcoat, cramming a check cap upon his head. In a moment he had gone.

Patrick switched off the office light, then went forth, as was his custom, to extinguish the gas-jets in the exhibition before locking up for the night. His comrade of the turnstile had already gone home; he was alone, entirely alone, with more than a hundred waxen effigies. It was now quite dark outside, for the moon had fled behind a screen of clouds, and there was a rushing sound of strong wind, which swept in gusts past the shuttered windows.

He paused to light a forbidden cigarette, and then it was that he realized with an odd detachment that what he had seen during the afternoon was not a ghost, but something



even more monstrous — a disembodied soul: the foul and evil soul of this wretched woman whose lovely image had bewitched him; the hideous reflection of a hideous mind. Behind her seeming purity and beauty had always been this horror, dormant, waiting to leap forth and devour. The wind rose, moaning, battering at the panes.

On such a night, he mused, as he tramped towards the monarchs, ghouls would surely stalk abroad and witches soar through the air clutching their broomsticks and screaming aloud their lust for Satan. Vampires, sorcerers, fiends. A nightmare pack of horrors . . . He stretched on tiptoe to lower the gas above the wan, impassive face of King Richard II . . . And in the old days witches were burnt alive like the guys now consumed by flames each fifth of November . . . And after the burning he supposed that these evil women could do no more harm but were destroyed for ever, they and their spells. A good job too. He entered the second chamber.

That night the inhabitants of the city were surprised to perceive a crimson flush sweeping the sky above the roof tops of a distant street. Then came a clanging of bells, a roar of motor-engines, and, hotfoot, in pursuit of the fire-brigade, a yelling, excited rabble. Mugivan's Waxwork Exhibition was on fire. No one wanted to miss the show, doubly welcome because it was free.

The wind was strong that night, and licked the flames eagerly, strengthening them until the efforts of the men armed with hosepipes became pathetic in their futility. At length the roof crashed in, and a wall of roaring flames rose as though to leap into the sky. They were triumphant, these pillars of fire, as though they knew that they were purifying, destroying a witch.

By morning Mugivan's Waxwork Show was a drenched and sooty ruin. Many of the figures were entirely destroyed, the monarchs having been on the whole unluckier than the murderers. Down in the Hall of Curiosities and Horrors there were a few survivors. Some were quite untouched. Mrs. Raeburn, for instance, appeared to have emerged unscathed from the ordeal, and stood upon her dais proudly and gracefully, pale hands folded demurely upon her breast. And yet, on closer inspection, Mrs. Raeburn proved not to be entirely unharmed. Her waxen face had melted and, running, the stuff had twisted upon her features a strange and devilish sneer. Save for her pride of carriage she was unrecognisable, distorted. And then the firemen made a further discovery.

Lying near by, where the flames had crackled most fiercely, was a charred and sodden bundle of clothing. They bent to examine it. It was, they found, a human body, the body of a young man.

## *Death of the Gardener*

BY L. A. G. STRONG

(From *John o' London's Weekly* and *The Bookman* — New York)

THE unexpected June shower thinned suddenly: its whispering ceased. It hung a minute in the air, a veil of gleaming gossamer, dissolved, and drifted out to sea. Looking carefully about him, Ian McLean came out from under the thorn where he had been sheltering, and swung the empty sack from his shoulders. A bout of rheumatic fever, some years ago, had made him pay heed to showers.

Standing with his legs apart, folding the sack, and drawing a deep breath, he gazed on a transfigured world. The evening had been beautiful before. He was not conscious that anything could be added to it. But now, each arching frond of bracken, each blade of grass, sparkled with points of light. The road glistened, and the boulders above it; the broom revived and glowed. Even the iron posts of the old wire fence across the road shone glossy as jackdaws, while rows of single jewels hung from the underside of every wire. Beyond, the reeds stood up, fresh delicate green above the milk-white sandhills: the stretch of sea was calm and luminous as silk, and Skye, the enchanted island, rose, picked out with emerald, its jagged, fantastic pinnacles dim as a bloom upon the evening sky.

Ian gazed, rubbed his ginger moustache with a huge, freckled finger, and went on to fetch his goat. His day's work in the garden was over. It had been a heavy day,

for next Friday the family were coming to the Big House for their summer holidays, and he wanted to have all in order. Do what he would, it was impossible to start making ready till a bare ten days before they arrived. The Northern spring came late. Next Friday would be the first of July, and the garden was a good six weeks behind their garden in the South. They knew that, of course. They were always very just, very generous, in their dealings. More like friends than employers, ever since he entered their service, thirty-six years ago. It was for this reason, not for his own credit, that Ian wished he could make the garden do impossible things. He could coax more out of it than any man; but the little hill and the row of pines which so effectually sheltered it from the south and west kept off a deal of sun, and the soil was light.

'Meh-eh-eh-eheh!'

Martha saw him coming. She was straining on her tether, stretching out her thin neck, and bleating welcome. He had put her a hundred yards up the slope, where the grass grew strong and sweet. Ian looked up at her, but did not speak until he had climbed a good third of the way. Then, to tease her, he called in a soft, enticing voice, 'Mar-tha! Eh, girl! Mar-tha!' and chuckled to see her impatient efforts to get free.

Soon, leisurely, he had reached her, and stooped to untie the picket. She leaned against him, shoving her head into the hollow between his chest and his thigh as he bent down, almost pushing him over. He had to put out a hand and catch her across the nose, to hold her off.

'Easy, easy, now! There, girl! There!'

He stood up, breathing hard, and coiled the picket rope, leaving a yard loose to lead her home. From the height, he took a fresh look round. It was a marvellous

evening, clear, soft, and shining. Unconsciously, he was guessing to-morrow's weather: such divination being instinctive, a part of his reaction to the scene. Apparently the inspection satisfied him, for he gave a deep sigh of content, and started downhill. Martha, who had been looking up at him with her mild lozenge eyes, turned suddenly frolicsome. She skipped from tuft to tuft, gazing mischievously down at the ground, and forcing him hurriedly to pay her out more rope, lest she pull him over.

'Easy, easy, girl! What's come to you, indeed! You'll turn the milk for our supper. Easy! Do you hear me, now!'

The goat stopped, and looked up at him, her long face full of irreverence. He laughed, and made as if to give her a clout with his left hand. She bucked, put down her head, turned her back, and reared up on her hind legs. Well contented, he led her down to the road, shaking her rope and chiding her affectionately.

Once upon the level, Martha became demure, and walked along quietly, her hoofs clicking on the rough, uneven surface. Their sound contrasted sharply with Ian's slow stride; and the echoes of both were intensified as soon as they came under the high eastern wall of the garden.

Ian worked in sight of his cottage, and that was a great comfort to him on rainy days, or in the winter-time. All he had to do was to lock the gate in the tall iron railings, cross the gravel drive, and plunge down a smaller, overgrown drive that led to his own back door. A minute from leaving work, he could be sitting in front of the kitchen fire, and exchanging the news of the past three hours with his wife. It was easy work, in the short winter days, when the sun set at four, and a chill rose

from the little overgrown drive, a chill he loved, for it meant home and the fireside. Ian had come to a time of life when he liked easy work. His spirit was willing; he worked hard when hard work was needed; but he was frankly glad when it was not needed. He was sixty-two, though no one would guess it, and at sixty-two the lust for hard work out of doors has passed.

Ian swung open the main gate of the drive — Martha, at the last moment, pretending to object — and the footsteps of man and beast were blurred on the grass of the little drive. Arrived at his cottage, he called twice to his wife. There was no answer; so he unhooked a large blue jug from inside the door, turned an empty box on its side, and milked the goat himself. A pint, morning and evening, was Martha's yield: plenty for the two of them.

'Still! Keep still. Wait you now. There's my girl.' ..

He had barely finished when his wife came down the drive. She had been up all day getting things ready at the Big House, and had waited for the shower. She was a short, dumpy woman, some ten years Ian's junior, with soft, kindly eyes, and a mouth which could show unexpected resolution. Her general air was mildly deprecating, but when the mouth hardened, as it did upon all points of principle, Mrs. Ian was more immovable than a dozen Marthas. For the big, easy-going, gentle man she had been an ideal mate. To give in to her was little hardship, and, judged by results, she gave wise counsel. Between them, in the Family's absence they took care of house and estate: and no lodge in the Western Highlands had better caretakers.

They had little to say to one another, as they sat down presently to supper. Mrs. Ian told in her habitual plaintive monotone what rooms she had cleaned out, how

there were two tiles off the washhouse roof, how a small packet of table knives had been mislaid, and what was still to do. Ian, between mouthfuls, told her of his work in the garden, a few words at a time.

'There is a third young robin now . . . comes and sits beside me . . . while I am at the beds. When I sat down . . . the biggest one flew over and perched on my knee. Not afraid, not afraid at all.'

'Well, really, now. The artful thing.'

'The strawberries . . . I have them well netted. A few of them are too far on, I am afraid. But most of them will be well for Friday.'

'Mrs. MacCallum told me she had it in a letter from Mrs. Young that Miss Monica was no looking at all well this summer.'

'Och, now.'

'Yes. A trouble of some kind, Mrs. Young is of the opinion.'

'Well! The poor young lady!'

Mrs. Ian gave him a glance in which there was a spark of exasperation. He went on with his meal, tiresomely incurious, giving her no opportunity to open up the surmises which were teeming in her mind.

The meal over, they sat for a while in silence, and Ian read the paper. He read it always in the same way, sitting with his knees wide apart, holding it open at right angles, high up: never folding back a page, nor even sloping it, to get the light. Little light came in, even from the brilliant westering sun, for the window was all overgrown with fuchsia; and the bees, still lazily occupied among the blossoms, kept up a sleepy bourdon, as if in the peace of the evening they had forgotten why they came.

For half an hour, maybe, Ian read on, becoming

conscious, towards its end, that his wife was beginning to stir meaningly. Not till she said 'Now, Ian,' did he fold the paper, put it by, and go over to the little table in the corner. From it he lifted a large Bible, and a small book of devotions (presented to Mrs. Ian by the Family), and brought them to the kitchen table. He carried the Bible with his huge hands pressed open against its sides, and set it down carefully upon the table, as if it were very heavy, and made of glass. The devotion book, which was small and light, rode on top.

Leaning forward, and scrutinizing the cover of the Bible, Ian blew at it, causing his wife to look up sharply. But she said nothing; and, as Ian opened the Bible, and found the place, she folded her hands upon her lap, and drew down her lips into an appropriate expression of severity.

'Let us read the Word of the Lord, in the thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy.'

Adjusting his spectacles, Ian read, with a kind of hushed earnestness, giving out every detail of every verse with equal emphasis. It was all alike to them both, the Word of the Lord, comprehensible or incomprehensible, of sovereign merit and power, the message and the discipline of salvation. Every night, save Sunday, the two held their short service together: and if Mrs. Ian accentuated the discipline, and kept him up to the mark, Ian was more than ready to comply. He was not always in a hurry to begin: he loved his pipe and his paper: but, once those were laid aside, he worshipped with the full devotion of his soul.

Slowly, carefully, and earnestly, following the text with his forefinger, he read the Word.

'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.



'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. . . .'

Monotonously his voice went on, and the bees still buzzed drowsily outside the window, and the kettle murmured on the range to make their good-night cup of tea. Then, the reading over, Ian shut the Bible, and took up the devotion book. For an instant, they looked at one another: then they turned back to back, pushed their chairs forward, kneeled, and prayed. A note of strain came into Ian's voice, for it was hard to kneel and read from the little book. The print was small: he was obliged to twist sideways, to catch what was left of the light. And so, having commended to Almighty God the Family, their daughter away in Glasgow, their son afloat, and themselves, they rose: Ian put away the books and Mrs. Ian busied herself with the tea.

'I don't think I'll take a cup the night. I'm hot. I'll just take a cup of cold water from the tap.'

His wife straightened up.

'No take a cup of tea? Why will ye not, I'd like to know? What's better for ye?'

'Och, I'm a bit hot, yet.'

'Take your tea, now. Cold water is no a healthy thing to drink before your bed.'

'No. I have a fancy for the water.'

Mrs. Ian gave a grunt, and went on making the tea. A minute passed before she spoke again.

'Many persons have given themselves an internal chill, swallowing down pints of cold water when they were hot from their work. Do you no mind Andrew McPhail below. . . .'

'Och, I'm no going to swallow down pints. I'm only going to take a half cupful. And I'm no perspiring. I'm just dry.'

He spoke good-humouredly, but she made no more attempt to overrule him. She came to the table, and sat sipping her tea. His big boots scraped on the flags outside, and, listening sharply to gauge the amount, she had to admit that it could be only a half cupful.

He returned, hung up the cup, and wiped his moustache with the back of his hand. She looked sideways at him.

'Will you no try a drop now, to take the chill out of the water?'

'Thank you, no. I'm well as I am.'

They sat up for a few minutes more; then Ian rose, to fasten up for the night. As he stood up, he stiffened slightly, and a momentary look of incredulity passed across his face. A strange, uneasy tremor, quick, slight, but disturbing, made him wonder for an instant if the cold water, after all, had gone astray. He blew, and squared his shoulders. The feeling had vanished. He could not even be sure he had felt anything: and he went into the tiny porch with a smile.

The pine-wood stair was narrow and winding: it had no window. Ian held up the candle for his wife to go first, and open the door. Then he blew it out, cupping his hand carefully behind it, lest a drop of grease fall. The bedroom was full of light from the west.

'I am well on with the work,' Ian was saying presently, as he pulled off his heavy woollen socks. 'I have the worst of it over me now. There's no much to be done, till they come.'

'That's a good thing. I don't fancy you to be working so hard, in the hot weather.'

Ian looked straight in front of him. He knew well enough that if there was the least sign of the work being behindhand, she would press him without concern. Her

loyalty to the Family was paramount. Sooner than have the smallest thing undone in preparation for their coming, she would have let her own kitchen go untended.

They got down together into the queer, small, square double bed which they both stubbornly preferred to the bigger one provided by the Family, and were soon asleep.

Two hours later, Ian fell into a dream. He was walking to church in company, on a hot day, under oppressive, copper skies. As he walked, the heat and inconvenience were aggravated by the fact that his stomach was growing insupportably heavy. For some reason, he was much ashamed of this condition, and laboured to conceal it from his companions. His difficulty became pain, and he began to blow so loudly that he almost woke himself from the dream. This is a dream, he said reassuringly to himself, this is just a dream; and, secure in this knowledge, he was allowing the dream to continue, when, without warning, he was hit a terrific blow in the stomach, which doubled him up gasping on his bed. The force of the blow was simply unbelievable, and it was followed by a thunderstorm of pain so blinding, so violent, that for a few seconds he had no idea of anything. Then the pain eased, and he lay clutching the bedclothes, his heart thumping madly, the sweat pouring from his body. His wife, half roused, was stirring and murmuring resentfully. Ian's mind became suddenly alert. At all costs, he must not rouse her. That drop of cold water — he would never hear the end of it. He must hold on, as best he could, till the pain passed. Then, perhaps. . . .

A second blow crashed into the very middle of him, and his whole body was swept by a storm of agony. It came leaping on him, in great gusts, without mercy. He knew nothing but the pain. A great steel gripe swooped

down, as if from a crane, plunging its curved prongs deep into his bowels: the prongs closed like a fist, and it was picked up, eviscerating him, tearing him with agony. He saw his wife's face, drawn with fright, her eyes dark and staring in the candlelight. For a long time he could not realize her questions, much less answer them. Then the candle left the room. He rolled over on his side, convulsed, his knees rigid, biting at the hot tumbled bedclothes.

Ages passed. Ian's self, his consciousness, lost all sense of place. He suffered agonies in a hundred worlds. Great bursting shells of pain: great fiery wheels of white and stabbing blue: great agonized earthquakes, in which the racked earth, the burning mountains, were ground together and tugged into one great knot that strained, choked, and burst asunder. For the few moments when he knew his body, Ian could not believe that there was anything left in it. It felt deadly cold, as if the explosions had blown out all his inwards. In these shivering respites, life came back to his stunned mind, and he began to hope that the fury of the illness was past. But, each time, the attack blazed out again: there were more explosions, more annihilation. . . .

His wife was busy at him, pulling back the clothes, pressing a hot-water bottle against his stomach. He opened his eyes. She looked pale and owlish in the early morning light.

'I'm going away down to the Dobies', and ask them to fetch the doctor who is staying above at the farm.'

A lifetime of experience asserted itself, and he found that he could speak.

'You must no . . . go . . . till four, when they will be stirring . . . The hay . . . tired. . . .'

But she was gone. He was alone. The heat of the

bottle, spreading through him, eased the pain, and made it manageable. He was suffering greatly, but at least he was a human being, lying on a bed. As his mind, returning to its home, began to lay hold on what had happened, a long sickening root of pain seemed to worm in between him and his heart. It bored so deep, with such cold threat of dissolution, that for the first time the idea came to him that he might not get better. There had never been such a pain before. Yes, said the root at once, writhing and twisting its way still deeper. You will not get better. You are going to die.

Immediately, with the certainty, came a wave of panic. An agonized sweat burst from him: his heart broke into sudden wild commotion: he began to struggle. Then checked by a savage stab of the pain, he tried to pray. His hot lips babbled, but his mind would not help them. It shied off like a terrified animal from the half-seen spectre. In despair, he gripped it, forced it back, tried to think of a prayer, tried to think of the last prayers he had uttered: and at once, calm and quiet as a sunrise, the remembrance came. He heard again the words he had read a few hours before. 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' Drenching, cool, and sweet, peace flooded his soul. Those words — they had been intended for his comfort. 'And underneath . . .' Then all was well. It was seldom he recalled any particular text, but this sounded in his ears with a voice like a singing bell. Blessed, blessed relief! He smiled, wondering how he could ever have been afraid. Then the pain came back, swinging its terrible hammers, and Ian again ceased to be a human being.

When he was next himself, it was clear morning. A man was bending over him. He recognized Dr. Fraser, the doctor from Edinburgh who was staying at the

Dobies' farmhouse. He tried to speak, but at once the room spun hideously round. A hand was on his forehead: there was a noise of someone trying to be sick. Now, he was flat on his back again. Words, meaningless, far off, floated in the air.

' . . . acute peritonitis . . . perforated appendix . . . his heart. . . '

As if it saw its enemy, the pain raged and stormed. Life, the world since it began, was nothing but wheel on wheel of flame. Great coughing volcanoes shot up flame from its centre: flails of fire drove it spinning through space. Fingers, icy cold, pulled up someone's sleeve: someone's arm felt a prick: the storms went off a little, turned into recognizable, separate thunder, sank to a throbbing rumble.

Ian had little more terrestrial consciousness. The morphia, withheld as long as there was hope, was given freely, once the heart weakened, to ease his end. He passed into a dim, slow day-dream, still in pain, but pain a long way off. Only once, past midday, did it prowl back, knocking with jagged hammers at his exhausted ribs: but before it shattered him he felt the welcome prick on his arm. With a great effort, he opened his eyes. Doctor Fraser smiled down into them.

'That better?'

Ian's eyes rolled shut, and he nodded faintly. Then he remembered something — his one worry, his one sense of guilt, which had been trailing him through many a nightmare. As his lips laboured to articulate it, the doctor bent close.

'It was no . . . the half cup of cold water . . . ?'

'Bless you, no. Nothing at all to do with it. It would have been all the same, if you'd drunk none, or half a gallon.'

Good. Good. That was well. He had not brought on all this by wilful obstinacy, by gainsaying Ellen.

'Tell . . . my wife . . . .'

'I've told her. She knows. Here . . . Mrs. McLean?'

'Och, indeed, yes. I know. Yes, indeed, indeed, Ian dear. Och, yes.'

Och yes. Och yes. Indeed. His mind floated away. . . .

He was in his garden. He saw it all very clearly: passively to begin with, then with awakening interest. The largest robin was sitting on the stone base of the iron railings. A corner of the netting had come loose above the strawberries. That must be seen to at once. He must go back and tell . . . go back and tell . . . tell . . .

A delicious vision rose before him, of gulls upon a rock. The sea, alive and gleaming in bright sunshine, was breaking softly over it, white as the gulls. They stood above, beyond the range of the waves. He saw them with amazing distinctness, their eyes, their bills, and the gleaming sides of the rock. With a wrench, he recalled his mind.

'Ellen.'

'Yes, dear. Yes. Don't you hear me? I'm here, I'm here.'

' . . . the strawberries . . . the net . . . corner . . . '

'Yes, yes. Now, don't fret. It is all right.'

' . . . the net . . . '

'Yes, yes.'

Yes. He fell asleep, too much exhausted to continue. Through the window came a thin, plaintive bleating. Martha was anxious to be milked. Mrs. Ian looked round doubtfully several times, but made no move.

'Meh-eh-eh! meh-eh-eh-eh!'

Ian, though not properly conscious, heard the familiar sound. He stirred uneasily. A colloquy in whispers followed, and in the end Mrs. Ian, tears streaming down her face, got up and went quickly from the room.

The bleating ceased.

Ian smiled. He was up on the hill, where he had tethered Martha the day before. It was a marvellous evening. Gazing upon it, he began to rise in the air. Deliberately, he recalled himself, and felt the shape of the bed beneath his body. A minute, and he was back, well above the hill. It was like lying half asleep on Sunday morning. One could wake — let oneself go; wake — let oneself go. Only, now, the waking became harder, instead of easier.

The sea was luminous and very calm. Magnificent clouds towered in the air. He saw all the Islands, in ever-widening view, Skye, Rum, Eigg, Uist, Canna, Mull, and Coll: all the Western Islands, dark and clear, floating upon the still, wide sea. Suddenly he felt misgivings, to be so high above the ground. Then he remembered. 'He rideth upon the heaven to thy help, and in His excellency on the sky.' To thy help. To his help, Ian's.

There was nothing to fear. Confidently, thankfully, he abandoned himself. The western sea, the theatre of his life, each bay, each inlet, every rock and field, lay clear and beautiful beneath his feet. A sound arose from it all, without disturbing the vision, and he knew the sound to be his wife weeping. With a part of himself he willed to comfort her; but all he could say was 'I am ready to go.' He did not even know if he said it, but he willed it aloud, several times: 'I am ready to go.' The weeping rose louder, but, selfish now for the first time, he could not heed it.

Joy, rising from the sea like music, sang around him. The air was bright: the breeze smelt of the sea. He was upborne, supported; there was no more pain. With a sigh of uttermost content, he let himself go for the last time, and leaned back upon the everlasting arms.



## *A Wedding Present*

BY W. A. WARD-JACKSON

(From *The London Mercury*)

IT was hard for Peter to realize death; his mother and father had died before he was ten. Of that he remembered little but the tears of his emotional governess, who stroked his hair softly as if he were some pitiable cat, and the pride he took in the black silk necktie she made him wear. Thirty years of his life had passed easily; a certain amount of money enabled him to live a detached life and kept him from the unpleasantness of realities. Lazy and meditative, he gave himself spasmodically to work and love, with no understanding of the objective significance of either. He thought, but only for the sake of thinking; he constructed philosophies listlessly like men who play patience to pass the time, but they varied with the weather and were always different. To Peter thought was a playful speculation and he never dared to be earnest for long, or to carry his ideas to their logical conclusion; he feared what he might find in life if he were to do so. He bore himself with humorous resignation, rarely perturbed; in a crisis he was able to drop back on a whole line of defences, piled up unconsciously and by habit in his imagination.

Often the sight of a cemetery made Peter think how happy must be the men who lay there; such was his romantic consolation for the reality he knew not how to face; death was a distant whimsical possibility, a hypothetical fulfilment, a happy end to the doleful effort of living. So when he came suddenly to the woman whom he had

loved in his ardent fitful way, and still loved, his mind was so filled with chaos and bewilderment that he would not believe her dead, in spite of the evidence which plainly showed that she was. His efforts to ignore the death, to live with Judith as before, were bound to meet with failure, even though he threw himself, as he did, into an almost semi-conscious trance.

Judith lay on the bed as he had often seen her lie; the dark hair, its lustre vanished now, spread out in a tangle over the pillow; when Peter felt her hand it was cold and unresponsive. Remembering the emotional governess he smoothed out the hair on the pillow and gently stroked it. Judith was still there; she could not be dead. Peter went downstairs as if nothing had happened; but it was a painful effort to deny the cold body that lay in her bed. The doctor pressed Peter's hand and thought him brave; he never noticed the miserable perplexity in Peter's eyes.

Peter sat at his desk fingering the telephone directory, thinking of undertakers and funeral furnishers. Circumstances seemed to be forcing him to take some action, an action he did not wish to recognize; a mere formality. He spoke hastily to the undertaker, looking as he held the mouthpiece to his lips at the photograph of Judith in front of him.

'With the utmost despatch. Yes. Yes. Quite simple. The day after to-morrow.'

Acting to himself, he kissed the mouthpiece and put down the receiver.

The maid showed in a gentleman who wished to sell fire-extinguishers; a tall sickly man in a well-worn suit. He carried a bag and looked a drunkard, nervous, incapable. Would Peter care to buy an 'Antignis' fire-extinguisher as supplied to the nobility and many English

town and country houses, as well as hotels and boarding establishments; it was infallible, fool-proof, easily managed; any fire extinguished in five seconds; the most efficient on the market to-day?

No! The man begged, almost cried; he had not sold an extinguisher that week, might lose his job, and he had been through the war. Peter was poor; he bought two fire extinguishers; Judith would do it. The man shook Peter's hand limply, showing stained teeth as he smiled, and went gratefully away with his bag, leaving two extinguishers on the table. Peter smiled as he took up his pencil and wrote on his clean white blotting paper:

'But he sold no more fire extinguishers and the manager of the firm told him his services were no longer required. So he became a bookmaker's clerk and took to wearing a bowler hat and smoked Woodbine cigarettes as he took down the numbers in a great red ledger with a yellow indelible pencil. He earned £3 a week with an occasional bonus when business was good and married a barmaid in Newcastle who gave him a quantity of strong language and three weak children; she also went to Church on Sunday and left one and sixpence in the plate, though sometimes only a shilling.'

That was good. Peter liked to make up little stories about people he met and when he had finished he ran his pencil through them to cross them out.

He was growing restless now and feverish; the window ought to be open. He mopped his brow and walked round the room. The carnations Judith had bought three days before were on her desk; they were rather faded, but Peter snapped one from its stem and put it in his button-hole. The silence of the house increased his agitation; he must do something; he could not allow inactivity to bring the reality of his tragedy full upon him. At the

telephone again he playfully tapped the glass of Judith's photograph and wondered why he was behaving like this. Perhaps he was mad. He stroked her hair with his nail on the glass; he would go to the funeral just as he was, in his grey suit and the buttonhole and the blue tie. He wanted Mayfair 4814, Gerrard 3840, Sloane 4219, and then Mayfair 6043; James and Arthur, Hilda Down and that young authoress, Mary Spencer-Schuman, would make a good party; Judith would be amused and Hilda could play to them. Could they come the day after to-morrow for dinner? Just a small party. Good. How was Judith? Oh, better, yes, much better. Good God, much better? What was he thinking of?

His hand was shaking a little now. He stole one of her cigarettes from the box on her desk, leaving everything as it was for fear she should notice; she always teased him about stealing her cigarettes. He smoked Virginian but one of these large round Turkish might soothe him.

The maid came again to ask if he would be in for lunch. Yes, of course he would be in for lunch. Peter would have liked to fast in sorrow like the Bible kings, to get away from people and live out his misery in silence. Of that he was afraid; lunch, lunch with her, was the only way to make it seem as if nothing had happened.

Suddenly he was at the telephone again. Mayfair 4814, Gerrard 3840, Sloane 4219, and Mayfair 6043. Would they mind very much if they did not come to dinner the day after to-morrow? No? He was sorry. Judith had a previous engagement! Yes. A previous engagement. As he put down the receiver he laughed the long uncontrolled laugh of a man who is nearly out of his senses; all the time he listened to himself and watched the bluff he tried in vain to play.

After lunch Peter found it impossible to stay in the

house; it was too full of his associations with her, and now he wanted to be away, to lose himself in a crowd, to walk, to do anything but stay in that house where he knew, or rather tried not to know, of the cold body of his wife in the bed upstairs. Lunch made him feel better and, once outside, he almost rid himself of the tragedy which was forcing its way insistently into his consciousness. It was easier to deceive himself in the midst of the business of the town. He took a bus and was relieved by the proximity of other people; he smiled at the conductor as he paid his fare and spoke of the weather, a thing he did not usually do. He wanted to draw his neighbour into conversation; it would be a comfort just to talk. He dared not; instead he watched the people as they passed on the pavement. It was spring, he remembered, and he noted the greenness of the trees as the bus passed the park; it was warm, and the chairs were crowded with people resting in the shade. Peter felt happy. He would go to an exhibition of etchings he had meant to see; he was fond of pictures.

Peter lost himself in the exhibition. He paid extraordinary attention to every picture, looking at it from afar and then from close up, brushing people aside in his efforts to see it. He spoke suddenly to people near him, making them move quickly away. Once he almost took a lady by the hand; she turned just in time to prevent it. Before one etching he spent longer than he had before any other: it was of a man and woman. The woman stood, outlined against the sky, in an attitude of quiet resignation; a delicate little head, framed in dark hair, was poised on a mature body that stooped slightly with laziness and fatigue; her hand was on her hip, the line of her neck long and graceful, her eyes deeply set and sad. At her feet sat the man leaning against a tree, his hands holding

his knees; he sucked a straw and wore a comic crumpled old hat; a rough droll sort of gipsy with a fleshy nose and thick lips. Peter was fascinated. The group seemed to embody all his own languor and sensuality; he saw in it indifference mingled with deep affection and slow-moving pleasure. There was something there of his own distant, easy compliance with life, his own adolescent romanticism. The picture was marked at ten guineas; more than Peter could afford. With hardly a moment's hesitation he decided to buy it for Judith. The idea took hold of him, lifted him out of himself. He called the attendant who knew him; he would take the picture immediately. Would the attendant please pack it for him as quickly as possible? It was usual for pictures to be sent at the end of the exhibition; the picture was required for the duration of the exhibition. Peter insisted; he must have the picture then or not at all; he talked at the top of his voice drawing the attention of other people. The manager came and gave way, reluctantly, as a great favour. Hardly able to write his own name, Peter made out a cheque and thrust it under the attendant's nose. He was impatient for the parcel to be wrapped, and the attendant fumbled with paper and string; Peter nearly snatched it from him. He walked up and down the little ante-room of the gallery. Judith would like the picture; she knew nothing of etching, but in all art had a quick instinctive power of appreciation which Peter had always admired. Judith understood him and would see in that group that same vague whimsicality and warm love of life which he had felt in himself. She would see too the renunciation of life to the imagination, all the indeterminate romance which Peter thought the picture implied. Peter was enchanted.

With his precious picture tucked well under his arm he

made for the door and was through before it could be opened for him; he generally waited to be shown out with due ceremony by the attendant. Mounting the bus, Peter held his parcel carefully lest it should be jarred and the glass broken; once seated he kept it poised on his knees, and his fingers felt through the brown paper the hard rim of the frame. He took a delight in giving presents to people, especially to Judith; he planned out how she would receive them, admire them and give her thanks, and then was overjoyed to see it all happen as he had foreseen. Once he had given Judith a small still-life. She had propped it up on the mantelpiece and sat down on the sofa to take it in from a distance. Peter had sat with her. Then with the little oil painting laid flat on the table she had looked down on it, the dark hair hanging over her cheeks. As Peter stepped off the bus he remembered her smile and the light in her eyes as she kissed him in gratitude. With the excitement of a child he walked hurriedly along the pavement, recollecting how long it had taken them to hang the still-life, what pleasure the choice of a suitable place had given Judith. It would be the same again; Judith would be even more delighted; it was a long time since he had given her a picture.

Already he stood on the doorstep, breathless, entranced; in his haste he fumbled the key in the latch and grew irritated with the door. A man was sitting in the hall, his legs crossed, a bowler hat balanced on his knee. He was dressed in black and said he had come to measure for the coffin. Peter supported himself against the table that always stood in the hall and clutched the picture closer; on no account must it be dropped. The illusion was over, and Judith dead; there was no one to receive his present. In that moment he saw the painful idiocy of his romancing, his futile imaginings, prevarications and contradictions;

the anticipations of his pleasure, his enthusiasm, his haste. The lines of unconscious defence had broken. Peter understood; it was impossible to play any longer. He threw the picture into a cupboard and sat down on the sofa, burying his face in his hands in utter despair and sorrow. The undertaker found him brandy, mumbled words of comfort, and patted him gently as if he were some pitiable animal. But Peter did not notice him then.

A year after Peter looked at the etching again; the glass was broken. He had it repaired and gave it to his sister — a wedding present.



## *The Silence Returns*

BY OLIVER WARNER

(From *The New Statesman*)

A STRANGE head peered between the low, snow-laden branches of a fir tree. Dark eyes, in a darker face, swept the white desolation. There was no sound to break the stillness; not a note of a bird. But behind the lonely figure, among the further trees, a lithe form, white as the ground, swiftly withdrew into the fastnesses.

Beyond the fir tree the ground sloped swiftly to a broad valley, quiet as the forest. On the other side the trees again climbed sharply; and beyond them, far in the distance, rose the steep and delicate contour of the mountains. Peak upon peak they lifted, their whiteness clear against the remote azure of the sky.

The man's movements were as silent as the world. His footsteps fell softly on the deep carpet, their sound imperceptible. His person, shrouded like a monk's in the thick garments of a trapper, was as muffled as sound itself. Yet in him was nothing ghostly or sinister. His eyes, restless and searching, were keen with life; his limbs big and active, his whole poise alert. Emerging from the darkness of the forest, he made his way down the steep to the valley, and then across the monotony of flatness. The snow lay flawlessly; there were no tumours or treacheries; the ground was firm. In the distance rose a solitary hump, as square in outline as the snow allowed. It was cave-like upon the side away from the prevailing wind. For this the man made, knowing it to be a shelter. Away, stretching north and south, a tiny chain across the

valley, stood the sentinel line of telegraph; below, glinting in the brittle sunlight of the freezing afternoon, were the two burnished lines of rail, the snow banked upon either side by the steam-plough on its latest journey. It was some days since the last fall.

On his way the man crossed the tracks of an animal. He knew them for those of a small wolf. It had passed lately, going fast across the open ground. The marks led towards the forest whence he had himself appeared. He reached the line of railway and walked by its side to the shelter, which he found unlocked. Within was a wooden bench, a lamp, a barrel of oil, a shovel and other tools, but no sign of any railwayman. There was a brazier, too, and a little fuel. A fire made, he heaped some snow into his billy-can, and taking out the provisions he had brought, prepared himself a meal.

But it was not shelter he needed, or food either — something less tangible; some assurance of humanity. For weeks in that frozen winter he had been alone among glorious desolation. Nor was that spell over. It would be months yet ere the thaw came and the great rivers flowed once more. It was his first experience of a long spell alone. It had its own fascination and rewards, made his self-reliance surer and his senses keener, and he liked it. But he was no hermit; and if his way crossed even at one remote point the line of human life, why should he shun it? The very purpose of the railway lines, and the thrum which he heard when he pressed close against the tall poles, spoke of a life now strange to him with which he was once but too familiar. He would appear, cross, and disappear once more.

The brazier burned; the food simmered, cooled, and was consumed; then the flames, softening, glowed gently, with quiet metallic clicks. Time drew on. Presently a noise,

tiny and nebulous, to be apprehended only by the ear keenly waiting, caused the trapper to start up. He stood by the side of the railway, but in an infinity of silence. There was nothing. . . . Yet he knew he had heard. Swiftly he crouched down to the rail itself. No; there was nothing. Yet presently, half-buried in the snow, a wire twanged. The sound was sharp, complete, and left an echo in the mind like a command.

It was some time before the first faint sound was repeated, but when it was, it was decisive. Twice it was heard, and then silence again recaptured the white world. But it was a silence undermined and violated. Its end was meditated and was certain. Presently, inevitably, it was broken once more; this time with no casual, warning break, for the noise, as yet undecipherable, now became constant. It was a low chuff; at that distance like a tired, remote creature toiling up a long incline; perpetual, almost irritating after the pregnancy of what had gone before.

The trapper's eyes gleamed and his mouth wrinkled slightly at the corners in a slow smile, which quickly faded, for he had begun to think of what was approaching as uncanny. The phase soon passed, and he smiled again. The chuff was moody. It grew louder in the clear air, then softer, then louder again. Bending down to the line, a low mumble was now distinct, like distant drum-fire. Nothing was visible. Mingling with the sound of working steam, the ear could now catch the regular, eerie, persistent clang of the cow-bell: 'Ding-diiing,' 'Ding-diiing,' beating time to the heart-beats of the great locomotive as she toiled up the long, arduous slope at the south end of the valley. The two sounds made a perpetual contrast, yet were so removed from each other that they could never harmonize, only vie in capturing the senses most insistently.

The struggle with the gradient over, the engine breathed more freely and the cow-bell grew dominant. It rang out across the snow like the cry of a lost being, a sound of infinite, romantic melancholy.

Soon small, leisurely streaks of blackish smoke soiled the translucent sky. Rumble, bell, and steam took on an ever clearer force, and the trapper's eyes steadied upon the far point where the line disappeared into the distance. The smoke widened, scattered, disappeared; the driver had shut off steam for a short declivity. The train was still far away, but the air of the valley was so clear and windless that every sound carried, seeming to be magnified. An echoing roar, quickly dying, betrayed a bridge over which the train passed with speed. Now it could not be long. Once more came the roar of the exhaust, and presently the movement of the smoke, low down in the sky, grew darker and more turbulent until, in the extreme distance, the pin-point of the straight rails swelled infinitesimally, and the train was at last in sight.

The trapper stood rooted. It was for this he had waited. He knew that the train would approach so fast that he wished he could check it, could prolong his pleasure. But there was nothing in the straight metallic miles to stop the thundering locomotive, and the pin-point grew, slowly at first and then with increasing swiftness until details quickened into life with every revolution of the wheels; the size and build of the engine, its lamps and buffer-plate, its formidable cowcatcher, forced themselves upon the eye. It was speeding. Up and down clanked the great rods like arms pumping near the ground; loud and furious grew the bell and the hiss of steam. The roar increased to a huge, all-enveloping crescendo as the train pounded towards him, the black bulk of the engine towering high above his head. It came upon him like a great wave,

for an instant leaving him dazed with sound, its wind beating hard upon his face, though he stood back respectfully from the metals. The driver had from his high square window seen him far ahead, and as the great engine passed he peered out for a second from his cabin. The trapper did not see him. His eyes were upon the long cars behind; ponderous, comfortable things, bearing much human freight from the unknown to the unknown. Those within were nothing to him; yet a child's face, pressed against a window, and a small white-clad arm raised in a fleeting salute, made him smile in his turn, and wave — a vague, significant token of kinship. The cars passed, the sets of heavy bogeys clicked over the joints in the rails; he caught a glimpse of the brakeman standing by his iron wheel, and the train had gone.

It vanished quicker than it had appeared. The rumble of the cars was again dominated by the clank of the bell, and then by the roar of steam. The fireman was stoking. Minute pieces of hard grit fell upon the white snow; the black trail spread and thickened. Then slowly, inexorably, all sound grew less, dying slowly, slowly, slowly, like the embers in the brazier.

At last it was over. The trapper looked up towards the crimson sun. It would soon sink. Away in the distance was the mockery of a sound, and then a silence as if nothing had ever been. He turned towards the forest.

# The Son

BY SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

(From *The Atlantic Monthly*)

## I

SHE had been its sole occupant for so long that she had come to think of the house as her own. Its lofty echoing rooms did not abash her; no terrors disputed her right to mount the grand staircase which through the height of the five stories circled above the marble-paved hall. With her candle — for she was conscientious in her trust, and the little light of a candle seemed more economical than the electric light — she went her last round, peering at the shutter bolts, tweaking the curtains to make sure that no moth lurked there, opening the deep empty wardrobes, turning up this switch or that to see that the bulbs had not perished, sniffing for damp, pausing sometimes to rub a fly stain off the gildings or to lift the dust sheet from a couch and beat up its cushions; and then, descending to the basement again, with its warm inhabited smell of gas, and cooking, and yellow soap, and vinegar, she would scrape together the last coals in the grate, recertify herself of the back door fastenings, stroke once or twice the sleepy cat, and go to her bed — contented, knowing that all was well, all in good order.

For they might come back at any moment, back to the house so long ago and so sweepingly abandoned that now they only existed there as a possibility, as a something of which it had been said, "They might come back."

Twenty-one years ago Lucy Abbott had stood before Mrs. Henriquez, receiving her last instructions.

'Our solicitors, Cox and Thompson, will pay you your money quarterly. If anything goes wrong, let them know. And if any repairs are necessary, have them seen to and send the bill to them. Here is the address. And get the parrot's food from the forage department at Whiteley's.'

Lucy Abbott, a widow, who went out charing by the day and sometimes looked at a magazine in the evening, was too grateful for her good fortune to speculate as to how and why it had come to her. To be a caretaker — to have a certain wage, and a certain roof over her head, and a position which freed her from the scoldings of cooks and housekeepers, the attentions of butlers and footmen — this was an ambition which she had never even attempted; for as a rule a caretaker is expected to have a husband — and she was a widow, and resolved never to marry again.

'Very good, madam,' she had said, too respectful to say more, though afterward she had reproached herself that no word of gratitude had escaped from her reserve. And so she had left the room. Three days later the family started in a fog for the south of France, and she saw no more the figures at all times but obscurely seen — through opening doors, or moving below on the marble pavement while she polished the stair rods high above them: Mr. Henriquez and Mrs. Henriquez, and Mrs. Ezra with her three little girls, and young Mr. Henriquez, dark, florid, romantic — though not quite so young as, imbedded in that family life, he appeared to be, since the glossy head seen from above was beginning to go bald.

She had never been one to gossip with servants; thus, though she had been the charwoman at No. 51 for three years — indeed, it was from scrubbing the back

area there that she had crawled home, one glittering May afternoon, to have her miscarriage — she knew little of her employers beyond their names and the sound of their voices. Their belongings were more real to her than they.

With the superb nomadic improvidence of their race, they had left the house almost as they had lived in it. The plate and the more valuable knick-knacks were sent to the bank, but the pictures still hung on the walls, the medicine bottles crowded the shelf in Mr. Henriquez's dressing room, the nursery cupboard was full of toys, strings of beads and used kid gloves lay jumbled together on Mrs. Ezra's bureau, the fifteen divers-coloured cushions billowed on young Mr. Henriquez's divan, and above them the cigar cabinet was still half full of cigars. The linen press held linen fine and plentiful enough for a palace; in the wine cellar Château Lafitte and Château Yquem matured and dwindled from their secret primes. A perambulator stood in the back lobby, and every night the parrot's cage was covered over with the remains of a wadded satin dressing gown which had been worn by Mrs. Henriquez. A dim, musty, whispering scent still touched the air as the heavy folds settled into place over the silent, gaudy bird.

In London, does one wish it, one can lead as nowhere else a life perfectly separate and unknown. Lucy Abbott did so wish. She was afraid of mankind; but it was mankind in the guise of some close fellow creature who might make her unhappy that she feared — a fear which rendered her insensible to the ordinary womanish terrors of living alone. By the end of six months she had so ordered her life that for days together she was under no obligation to exchange a word with any human being. Her train of life was so regular that even when she went



shopping in the back streets that crouched among the mansions of the quarter there was little need for her to open her lips. The woman at the dairy knew that if it was Tuesday, half a dozen eggs were what she required; if Friday, half a pound of butter. The butcher, the baker, the grocer, the fishmonger, the greengrocer, could tell beforehand when she would appear and what she would want; and, being so regular a customer, she was well served, for all the modesty of her purchases, so that she was seldom obliged to rebuke or remonstrate.

Once a fortnight she visited the forage department of Whiteley's for the parrot food, and on her way thither she would give threepence to the blind man at the corner; and twice a year she had in the sweep for the kitchen chimney. She never went to church, for the experience of life which had taught her to fear man had not taught her to love God. Sometimes on Sunday afternoons in winter she would walk as far as the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, where she threw a week's accumulation of crusts and bacon rinds to the ducks and sea-gulls and watched for a minute or two the toy yachts lying over under the wind. From these excursions she would walk briskly home, her thoughts gone before her to the clear kitchen fire where, since it was Sunday, she would make toast for tea; and running down the area steps, as the accustomed bulk of the great house reared and darkened above her, she would rejoice with an obscure gladness that she was home again. The gas lit — for there was no electric light in the basement — the parrot would begin to sidle toward her on his perch, shrieking and flapping his wings, and the cat, rising with dignity, would stretch itself, and proceed to the corner where its saucer of milk was always set down for it.

In summer she did not even go so far as the Round

Pond, for with her regular life she had grown stout, and walking upon hot pavements made her feet ache. Instead, she would go upstairs to the drawing-room and sit by the open window with her crochet lace. The sparrows chattered on the balcony; across the road in No. 46 someone would be playing the piano; and presently the church bells would ring. Behind her the room would begin to darken; in the houses opposite, this window and that would light up, and from the open casements sounds would come of knives and forks rattling against plates, and after that, from the basements, the sounds of washing up. She could see to work no longer, and from the area, where his cage was set out, she could hear the parrot shriek for company.

'I must go down,' she would think, making no move. For now the room behind her was completely dark, and the languid voluptuous evening flowed into it like a caress, like an enchantment, so that she seemed to be no longer Lucy Abbott, the caretaker, but some grand sad lady whose satin skirts lay silent around her, whose mind was filled with lofty and impalpable regrets. All was lost, but all was well. Footsteps sounded on the pavement beneath; sometimes the smell of a cigar floated up; sometimes soldiers marched by, for it was war time. The parrot shrieked again, his cry piercing the air like a shaft of light piercing water. There she sat, Lucy Abbott, alone in her great house, hidden, solitary, unsurmised as a thought, waiting for the moon to rise, waiting for them to come back, waiting for she knew not what.

## II

So twenty-one years had gone by. The first cat had died, and after a while she had adopted a kitten; and when

the kitten had grown to be a cat, and was dead in its turn, another kitten was adopted. During the war she had given up crochet and knitted socks instead; and once a policeman came about the lighting regulations, and the bread was dark, and shopping had been complicated with coupons; and after the war there were fireworks in Hyde Park, but she had not gone to see them. Once she had had influenza, and twice the pipes had frozen. That was all. To look back on, it was not much.

But now it was all over, and she knew not what was to come. For the twentieth time she reread the telegram:

RETURNING TO-NIGHT. ALBERT HENRIQUEZ.

Albert. That was young Mr. Henriquez. The overheard voice of Mrs. Henriquez travelled out of the past, saying contentedly: 'Albert is a good boy. I have never had any trouble with him.' Crumbling bread through a sieve for the bread sauce, for a partridge-seemed the best thing to buy for a gentleman dining alone, she tried to recall him, but nothing came back with certainty except the aspect of that glossy head with the little bald circle on its crown. Yet, though she could not recall him, it was he whom she remembered, it was he whom she had expected. He had stood behind her in the obscurity of the drawing room; it was the smell of his cigar which had floated up to her; dark, florid, and romantic, it was he whom she had waited for all these years, knowing that he would come back. They were all a lovely family, but he was the loveliest of them. Once, when she was scrubbing the front steps, he had come out of the house and, seeing her, he had raised his hat and said, 'How do you do, Mrs. Abbott?' And now, for one night at any rate, he would be hers, and she should minister to him.

The impulse seized her and, though she was tired with running about ever since the telegram came, she left the crumbs and hoisted her ageing body up the three flights of stairs to his room. It was all in readiness — the fire burned nimbly, the curtains were drawn, the fifteen cushions were plumped up, the shaded reading lamp threw a deeper shadow into the lap of the marble woman with no clothes on. It looked just the same as ever; it looked as though he had been there all the time. A thin tarnish of fog was in the warm room — perhaps the windows were not quite closed. She pulled aside the curtain, and the light, striking obliquely upon the pane, showed her a word written in small silver characters close under the crossbar: *Infelix*. She had never noticed it before, and what did it mean? He must have written it, scratching the glass with his diamond ring; for she could remember now that he always wore a diamond ring. Perhaps it was the name of a lady.

Oh, but she could recall him perfectly! From that diamond ring a whole recollection flowered. Only he would not look quite like that now. Twenty-one years are bound to make a difference, even to a man.

But when he came, bringing the fog into the closed house with him, he was so greatly changed that no expectation of change could have prepared her for what she saw. He was pale and corpulent, he had false teeth and wore a wig, and his clothes — he who had used to be such a dandy — were slovenly put on, and did not seem to fit him. Under the dark melancholy eyes were great pouches of discoloured flesh, such as one sees on the faces of certain birds. But that was not all. Young Mr. Henriquez had been affable and debonair; he had not been the sort of gentleman to trouble himself about anything; an air of sheltered ease, of feline well-being, had clothed all

his movements as it clothes the movements of a prospered house cat. But this Mr. Henriquez had a cold in his head: he shivered, and kept on his overcoat, and the match, which he struck to light another cigar, fell from his fingers and charred a hole in the doormat, while he stood glancing about the hall as if something lay in wait there.

'Well, Mrs. Abbott. You see I remember your name.'

'I'm sure I'm much honoured, sir.'

'After all these years, what? How long is it?'

'Twenty-one years, sir, almost to a day.'

'It's cold. This floor ought to have a carpet on it, a thick Chinese carpet.'

'I've lit a fire in the dining room, sir, and in your sitting room and bedroom. And I have prepared some dinner, sir.'

Three fires and a dinner — in the stress of the last few excited hours it had seemed to her that she was preparing a most lavish and splendid welcome, but now she doubted and was abashed. Three fires could not do much to warm the empty house, and of course a dinner like hers would be no novelty to him. It was a sad home-coming, poor gentleman! It was not to be wondered at if he looked cowed and ill-content. After twenty-one years he had come back alone to the house of his splendid days, and there was no one to welcome him but the caretaker. Her little taper of remembrance, how could it lighten him? How should he warm himself at such a welcome as hers? No wonder he seemed loath to go forward. For he still stood on the large mat, glancing about the hall as though something lay in wait there, peering up at the darkened skylight so high above, following the ascent of the stairs as though he waited for someone to come down them.

She, who for all these years had dwelt alone and unafraid, suddenly began to feel oppressed by the house,

opening out its vistas of solitude all around them. It was as though with his coming fear had come too — his fear, his melancholy. And she called back the being of the house in the old days, full of people, full of doings, flowers, lights, company, music and laughter, no expense spared; a glorious order, sustained and dominated by the imperious commands, the untiring, unyielding sway of Mrs. Henriquez — moulded, as it were, and propelled onward by the impulse of her sweet heavy voice. If she, the servant, thus recalled the mistress, how much more acutely must he now be recalling the mother! And he was always such a devoted son — the only son, the apple of her eye. He had never married; he had never broken away as most sons do; he had always retained the dependence and biddable ways of a child. Once more she heard the heavy voice saying contentedly: 'Albert is a good boy. I have never had any trouble with him.'

'How is Mrs. Henriquez, sir?'

Oh, she should not have spoken! For he looked wildly at her; for a moment she thought he would strike her. Then, as though he would wipe out her question, drown any echo of it that might still be lingering in the empty house, he walked over to the gong and struck the metal disk a blow which weighed on the air like the toll of a bell.

### III

Back in her kitchen, Lucy Abbott tried to fasten her mind to the business of cooking and dishing up. Gravy soup, fillet of sole, the partridge with bread sauce, fried potatoes, and a cauliflower, tinned pineapple, and sardines on toast. When she had ladled the soup into the tureen she climbed on a chair and fetched down from its hiding place on the top of the dresser a bunch of keys. It should

have been taken upstairs on a salver, but as all the plate was in the bank she must make shift with a saucer.

He had pulled one of the leather armchairs to the fire and was reading a book. He did not look round as she entered, but at the faint clatter of the keys sliding together as she set down the tray he started.

'What's that noise?'

'I have brought you the keys, sir. This is the cellar key. What will you be pleased to drink?'

'The keys.'

He took them from her and weighed them in his hand, clinking them together and listening attentively to the sound. Then he went back to his chair, and dandled them in the firelight.

'Dinner is served, sir.'

'Oh! Here, take these things, and get me a bottle of whisky.'

During the meal he did not speak, except once when he asked her if there were any olives. 'He has eaten nothing,' she thought, staring at the dishes which covered the kitchen table. Such food was not to be wasted; she must carry it to the larder, and to-morrow she could make *risssoles* from the partridge and fish pie from the sole. But before she was aware what she did she had shovelled all together and thrown it into the fire. When she had washed up she came back to the kitchen and fed the cat. Then, leaning heavily upon the table, she began to read the newspaper, greasy and blackened with pot marks, which was spread over it. The smell of good food 'was still in the room; the partridge bones crackled in the flame. She could hear the cat's tongue rasping against its dish. Poor pussy, she would have enjoyed those bones, and the sardines would have been a treat to her, too.

'Better the cat,' thought Lucy Abbott. 'Then someone

would have enjoyed it, at any rate.' And, rocking her weight upon her hands, she was beginning to cry from weariness and disheartenment when she heard his voice.

'Mrs. Abbott, where are you? Damn these stairs! They're as dark as Egypt.'

Before she could wipe her face and run to the door he had come in, carrying the whisky bottle in one hand and his glass in the other.

'I've come down for a chat, Mrs. Abbott. I can't sit alone all the evening. Fetch yourself a glass, and we'll hobnob down here, where it's cheerful.'

He sat down in the old broken basket-chair and stretched out his hands to the blaze. The diamond ring flashed on the twitching hand. It had not aged. Had a lamp been lowered into the sepulchre, those blue and green and scarlet eyes would have been found wakeful among the corrupting flesh.

'Well, now. Tell me how you've been getting on all these years.'

'It's been pretty quiet, sir.'

'Quiet. H'm. No rats?'

'No, sir. I've never seen any rats.'

He raised his melancholy glance and stared at her, as though he were considering her words.

'Of course there were the Zeps, sir. But they didn't do any damage here.'

'Zeps?'

'Yes, sir. In the war, sir.'

'Oh, yes, yes. The war. But no rats, you say?'

'No, sir. No rats.'

He turned again to the fire, and she looked at the whisky bottle.

But he had drunk very little.

The clock ticked, no word was said. At last he lifted



his weight out of the creaking chair and began to wander round the room.

‘There’s the parrot!’

‘Yes, sir. He’s never ailed. But he’s quieter than he used to be.’

The bird woke up, and started to tweak among its breast feathers for lice.

‘Why do you keep it in a cage?’

He spoke with vehemence, but even if she had been able to think of an answer he would not have heard it, for, brushing past her, he was gone from the room. She heard him going up through the empty house, switching on all the lights as he went. A door banged, and then there was silence.

She sat down and leaned her head on her hand. She believed herself to be thinking, but no thoughts came. She sighed, and stared at the cigar ash on the hearth, and sighed again. It seemed to her that she must be going mad. No woman in her senses could feel so daunted and bewildered, so castaway from the common assurances of life. ‘I’ve overdone myself,’ she said, speaking aloud so that her own voice, at any rate, might be real and known to her. ‘That’s what it is — I’ve overdone myself, getting things ready, and the dinner, and all. And then there was that telegram. I’ve got out of the way of such doings, living so humdrum for all these years. And then I’m not so young as I was.’

But her words fell away from her into the silence, and soon she forgot that she had spoken them, wandering in such a maze of bewilderment that when she heard the music she was even for a moment at a loss as to who could be playing the piano upstairs. But the music lulled her, and she listened with a kind of drowsy pleasure, too coarse of ear to know that the instrument was all

untuned and frantic, too ignorant to be fretted by the aimless reiterations of the performer. Her eyelids pricked and her body nodded forward. 'I mustn't go right off, in case he rings,' she thought; and the next thing she knew was that the music had ceased and the noise had begun.

'Let me out! Let me out!'

He was shouting at the top of his voice and hammering on the door. She ran upstairs, stumbling and sick, and because all the lights were turned on she seemed to be running through a strange house. 'I'm coming, sir.' But even when she stood at the door, and knocked on the panel, and spoke through it, the shouting and the hammering continued. It seemed to her that she dared not go in, and at the same moment she turned the knob and the door yielded exactly as usual. She heard him catch his breath and leap back.

'Oh, Mrs. Abbott! It's you, is it? Come in.'

He was standing behind a chair, as if to guard himself. He panted, and his wig was awry, but otherwise he appeared to be no way discomposed, and his amicable smile forbade any questions on her part. He said no word to release her; and, holding to the door for support, she waited, dazed and blinking before the violent light which streamed down on them from the chandelier. The cut-glass prisms flashed blue and emerald and scarlet, and she knew that they reminded her of something she had seen before. The lid of the grand piano was open, as though after all these years a secret in hiding there had come forth. The room was icy cold, the empty grate glittered like an armoury, the marble mantelpiece looked as though no fire could ever warm it again.

Above it, set in the wall, was the portrait of Mrs. Henriquez, smiling and triumphant, holding a fan and wearing a white satin evening dress with a tight waist

from which, like a flower from its calyx, her bosom and shoulders rose full and glistening. She must be an old woman now, if she was not dead; but the former will lived on in the portrait and looked forth its assurance that a servant would observe its bidding. Lucy Abbott felt herself to be under her mistress's eye. Her glance waited upon it, her faculties refuged themselves in the old stronghold of submission; she was ready to forget, in obedience to the dead, her fear of the living.

But he had seen the direction of her gaze, and started forward with a shout — the furious outcry of one who at long last beholds and recognizes his fatal enemy, his tyrant, the usurper of his soul, and hails him with such an explosion of malice as abolishes the memory of fear. Shaking and retching, he snatched up the heavy steel poker, and took aim, and shivered the glass. And then with blow after blow he began to batter and demolish the painted face, the indifferent bosom, till the canvas fell down upon the hearth in shreds; and even then in his hate he struck on, beating at the wall behind it, as though he could never come to the end of his hatred.

Lucy Abbott had fallen upon her knees. She pressed her hands over her ears and shut her eyes, but still she could hear the blows and the snarling breath dragged through his nostrils as he struck, and still she saw the reeling figure, and the veins that stood out on the clenched and livid hand, and the hairy wrist that shot for ever from the shirt cuff.

At last she knew that he had ceased to strike. Slowly she raised her head and opened her eyes. His back was to her; but, as she watched, the madman turned and showed her a face leeringly triumphant and contented — the face of a child that had gained its will. Once or twice he nodded, smiling mischievously, chuckling to himself

and pursing up his lips; and then, steering a wide circle as though he would keep out of her reach, he ambled from the room.

Still on her knees, she heard him descending the stairs and crossing the hall, and fumbling with the catch of the front door. And then the door closed behind him, and she heard his shuffling footsteps die out along the street.

## *Postal Order\**

BY MALACHI WHITAKER

(From *The Adelphi*)

TWO young girls were walking down the promenade of a seaside town early one June morning. The tide was in, and there beneath them was the sound of the sea lap-lapping at the concrete walls. It was dull and rather cold, but they wore summer clothing, as they were just fifteen years old, and for a reason which they did not comprehend, wished to appear attractive all the time. They breathed deeply of the sea air, though it was mixed inextricably with the smell of drains and fish offal; not for any good it might do them, but because they thought that by so doing their small fronts might appear more mature. However, few people took any notice of them.

If they passed a boy of their own age, they would give him a sidelong glance, and, after he had passed, turn to each other and laugh. Then, with a smile still lingering on their faces, they would look carelessly back over their shoulders. Usually nothing happened, the boys of fifteen or sixteen all appearing to be more interested in things other than girls. But if one did look back at them, they breathed quickly and excitedly, and pulled each other by the arm, and one would mutter 'Come on! Come on! We don't want anybody like that. Isn't he common?' By 'common,' they meant that the boy was poor, or dirty looking, or ugly. By the time their excitement had cooled down, the boy was probably out of sight. But they were

\* From *No Luggage*, by Malachi Whitaker. By arrangement with Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd.

always hoping that somebody a little older, say eighteen, would stop and speak, and find in one of them his ideal.

The girl who was the elder by a few weeks was called Bernardine Smith. She had large eyes and full lips, and a quantity of black curls which grew low on her neck. She wore a well-washed, yellow-striped dress and no hat. In one hand she carried a parcel containing some child's napkins; a present from her mother to her cousin, whom she was just going to visit. She liked neither the parcel nor the idea of the visit, yet she was always talking about her cousin Audrey, and boasting that she had married a pierrot.

The name of the other girl was Lucy Atha. She was dark, too, but not so plump as her friend. She had on a blue frock of imitation linen, and a blue hat of a slightly different shade. She carried a large purse with ninepence in it, also two or three letters, worn from constant unfolding and reading, and a crumpled blue handkerchief with the letter M on one corner. She was a town girl enjoying the sight of the sea, and of the people on holiday who seemed to do nothing but walk up and down the promenade all day long, with stiff new boots or shoes on. She was staying for a few weeks, and had made friends with Bernardine, and now went everywhere with her. Indeed, every moment seemed wasted when she was away from Bernardine; she could not bear to look forward to a winter that contained no Bernardine. Often she would call for her friend at eight o'clock in the morning.

By and by they turned to the right down a wide new road. As they left the promenade, Lucy became quiet. She was always afraid of going inside the houses of other people, thinking that the time might be inconvenient, or that she might not be wanted. She was always willing

to wait outside, and yet was vexed if anybody took her at her word and left her there.

She began to wonder about Bernardine's cousin Audrey, to whose house she was now going, but whom she had not yet seen. This cousin had always liked pierrots, and when she was younger used to go to watch their performances, two and sometimes three times a day during the season. One year, one of the pierrots, who always dressed in red, began to notice her, and after a time, to talk to her. He sang the choruses in a 'talking' voice; that is, he could not sing well. And he also danced twice during each performance. His dances were almost exactly alike to the indiscriminating, ending with a handspring and two notes *POM POM* on the piano. He was young, and good looking, and full of optimism, but there was nothing in his life or his performance to justify it. His mouth was always a little open, and when he leaned forward and made a confidential remark to the audience, it was usually a silly one, or quite irrelevant, like 'A-har!' or 'All the nice girls love a pierrot,' or 'Up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee!'

Still, Bernardine's cousin thought he was wonderful, and in a burst of enthusiasm for her, he said 'Let's get married.' They had no money, not even enough for the wedding, but he borrowed fifty pounds from one of his fiancée's relations (he was clever enough to do that) and they held a wedding feast that was not soon forgotten. This had happened four years ago, when Bernardine was eleven, but she had remembered every item of the day; the great number of people who were invited, and the presents lavished on them; the arrival of the other pierrots in almost unbelievable finery; the beer that flowed like water; the way her relations did not mix with his, but stood on one side looking a little disapproving, all

except Aunt Cora Peacock, who took too much to drink and went about laughing uproariously and trying to put her finger exactly on the tip of everybody's nose.

The name of the pierrot was Tom Corley, though he was billed as Titian d'Avray, *premier danseur*. When Audrey's father had made tentative inquiries as to his income — sensitive feelers which drew back almost before they reached their objective — he said a little coldly, as if such a thought as that had hardly entered his mind, 'I have my prospects.'

What these prospects were, nobody knew. He had not even obtained a winter engagement, and summer was rapidly passing. Indeed, all that winter he was out of work, except for a few weeks during the pantomime season when he was engaged, not as a principal nor even in a small part, but to do some menial work behind the scenes.

So that his wife should not be lonely, he had rented a small house within a mile and a half of where her mother lived. With Audrey, he had gone to the nearest city and chosen a houseful of furniture, which was to be paid for by instalments. All Audrey's friends flocked to see her, and for a time, all her husband's friends too. But she found that refreshments, which had to be paid for, cost a lot of money; and Tom did not like making excuses for the lack of them. Gradually, the friends stopped coming. That was lucky, for very soon afterwards, the furniture people came and took away most of their things.

Then the first baby arrived. Tom was delighted. In the cold, bare room where there was not even a rug on the floor, so that he left his crumpled socks just ready to stand on when he jumped out of bed, he picked up the child in his arms and carried her about, peering at her hot, crinkled face and her streak of wet-looking, dark hair.



'The little darling!' he said. 'We must call her Pansy!'

Audrey had been crying before he came in; partly from exhaustion, and partly because of a dull, nagging fear which would not leave her. She was afraid of the future. They had been able to manage, with the help of her parents, before the baby was born; but what, she wondered, would they do now. The fifty pounds for the wedding had not been repaid, and that fact kept raising its head like a snake to strike her.

'Don't you bother your dear little noddle,' Tom kept saying. 'Let *me* take the responsibility for this. I'll do all the worrying that's necessary.' But he made not the slightest effort to pay back a shilling.

The following summer he had obtained an engagement. Back came the furniture, back came their old friends, and many new ones. Little Pansy was prinked out in the prettiest of white robes, and shown off everywhere. Oh, they had a good time! He jumped and pranced tirelessly on the pier, threw out his arms and legs, whirled around and finished, feet coming down together on the piano's last *POM POM*. It seemed wonderful to have a little regular money after having had none at all.

Audrey began to feel ill, and instead of picking up, became more and more sick. Tom hardly liked coming home to his wife's sombre eyes. He kept telling her to 'buck up, old girl,' and look more into the future. 'I still have my prospects,' he told her, and she echoed after him, 'Yes, yes, you still have your prospects, of course. Yes.'

The next spring, before Pansy was quite a year old, the twins were born. Again Tom was delighted. Again he walked around the denuded bedroom, a child on each arm, grinning proudly and saying 'Would you ber-lieve

it?' He insisted that they should be called April and June, but Audrey did not like to do so.

'It'll look silly calling twins April and June,' she said doubtfully; yet that was what they were christened.

At this time, Audrey's mother almost lived in the house. There was nobody else she could have, as money was again short, and her mother made a very good nurse. Audrey would sit up in bed, feeding a baby at her tired breast, and look despairingly forward to the time when she would have to get up and resume her household duties, with the addition of the twins, one of whom was very weakly, and constantly whined.

As she lay, little Pansy would creep about the bare floor, picking up pins and stray pieces of fluff, and pulling herself up by the rail, try unsuccessfully to put them on the bed. With a sort of rapt concentration she would go about her self-appointed job of clearing up, as though she knew already that she was to be the eldest of a family; only stopping every now and then to say 'Mamma,' in a low, comforting voice. Her fatalistic acceptance of the twins amused her father, and he thought of his daughter's prospects as being very bright indeed.

Sometimes he was in work, sometimes out. Audrey would not have the furniture back again, preferring to buy a piece here and a piece there for a few shillings, rather than have all the trouble over again. Her mother went back home, taking a good deal of comfort and happiness with her.

If Audrey heard a knock at the door, she would open it the merest crack, on a chain, as though she were afraid of what might be on the other side, but really to hide the dearth of furniture. She did not often smile now; nobody would have recognized in her the airy, vivid creature of the wedding day. Yet there was something in her life

which secretly pleased her, something which she kept to herself. It was the fact that her husband loved her; that he was never attracted by any other girl; and that of all the world, his wife was the one alone that he wanted.

The two young girls who were coming to see her reached the corner of a rather dingy street. The morning was grey, and perhaps that made the houses look more dirty than they really were. Dustbins were being emptied, and a good deal of loose paper was blowing about, which the men with the carts did not attempt to pick up. Lucy felt indignantly that they ought to run and retrieve each piece as it fell, but the dustmen thought that probably nature would attend to that, and save them the trouble of bending.

Bernardine knocked at a door whose grey-brown paint was blistered with the sun and rain of years. She kept smiling indulgently and looking over her friend's head. There was the sound of small feet running over bare boards, *bam, bam, bam, bam, bam*, then the noise of a fall and a weak wail. She knocked louder, and the crying stopped. The door was opened a little way, showing the head of a woman with eyes like Bernardine's eyes, and heavy, lustreless hair.

She smiled when she saw her visitors, and said in a soft pleasant voice, 'I didn't know it was you. I was expecting the milkman.' She had a jug in her hand.

To let them in, she had first to shut the door, which was on the chain. As they stood outside, it seemed to Lucy that they had already paid their visit, seen everything, and gone. She felt a vague pity for the street, the woman, the crying baby, and for the milk jug, which looked to her as if it had often been held out timorously, even supplicatingly, for milk which would remain a long time not paid for.

Soon they were in a bare, clean room, which had a low fire, around which clothes were airing. Audrey asked in rather an embarrassed voice that the clothes might remain there, as she was waiting for them to dry; but she seemed troubled by her lack of hospitality and repeatedly asked if the girls were cold. They assured her that they were quite warm. She kept turning the garments in front of the fire, as if she were sure that by those means they would dry almost immediately, and then the girls could look at the fire they said they did not need. The atmosphere was humid and a persistent but not unpleasant smell hovered about the room.

Pansy, now a child of three, was trotting around, trying to amuse another little one of two who had thin, fair hair and eyes red from weeping. The elder child was dark. She had grave, dark, troubled eyes and an unsmiling mouth. She looked as if she had a great deal of care and responsibility; already a faint frown-mark rested on her forehead. Lucy's heart went out to her.

'Where's April?' asked Bernardine, giving her parcel to her cousin. 'Mother's sent these napkins. There's a dozen, and they're all washed.'

'It's very kind of her,' said Audrey, tears rising to her eyes. 'April's having a nap. She's not been so well, and she keeps on crying — it's her teeth, you know. Would you like to look at her? She's in Pansy's cot.' While she spoke, she kept smiling at Lucy, and then sniffing a little to see if that would keep back her tears. Pansy cleared some sewing things off a chair so that Lucy could sit down.

'No, no,' cried Bernardine, fearful of waking the child.

But it was too late. The thin sound of wailing came from upstairs, and Audrey hurried away. The eyes of the two friends met in an enigmatic stare.

'She's going to have another,' said Bernardine in a whisper.

'Another? What for?' said Lucy in a shocked, surprised voice. Yet she had already found that out for herself.

'Sh! That's why I brought these.' Bernardine pointed to the parcel. 'Isn't it awful?'

'I think she has quite enough,' breathed Lucy.

Audrey came downstairs, carrying the sick child in a cot blanket.

'Let me take her,' said Lucy shyly.

'I don't think she'll come to you,' Audrey answered with doubt in her voice. 'She won't go to strangers.'

However, the child went to Lucy, and lay in her arms, looking up solemnly, not sure whether to cry or remain silent. Pansy picked up an envelope from the floor, took it across to a wooden chest of drawers, and tried to open one so that she could put it away.

'Give that to me, darling, it's daddy's letter,' said the mother. A light had come into her face, transforming it for a minute, so that she appeared very little older than Bernardine. Tom was working on the East Coast. He had failed to get an engagement in their own town for the season, and he seemed quite content to be away. He liked to write letters to his wife. He would recount a series of triumphs to her, which sounded very convincing; but, as she said, he did not send much else to go on with.

She fumbled with the letter half shyly, talking to Lucy.

'Tom says he hopes the next will be a boy,' she said. 'I'm expecting again, you know.' The light faded gradually from her face, leaving it bleak and old. Lucy gazed up with the look of one who has to pretend that she does not know something that she knows very well. Audrey misunderstood her expression, and said without lowering her voice, 'It's all right, Pansy knows.'

Lucy was astounded, and kept blushing and looking first at Pansy, who answered her with unfathomable eyes, and then at the baby on her knee. All at once, she seemed to be gathered up into an unknown, menacing, wholly developed life.

Audrey was looking at her letter, with a resigned shadow still on her face.

'Look what he's done for me,' she said, holding out a small card on which there was a crayon drawing of an apple and a pear on a blue plate. The apple was red, round and flat, the pear yellow and pearshaped, the leaves green and the plate blue, with a pretty white pattern on it. It was neatly done, like something in a good child's copybook.

'He's crayoned it all himself,' she continued in a very sad, low voice. 'But I do wish it had been a postal order.'

The baby on Lucy's knee began working itself up to cry. 'Iya,' it whined, 'Iya, yah.'

'Give her to me,' said Audrey. She began to rock the child, singing to her in the tune of a nursery rhyme:

'He sent me an apple and pear on a plate,  
But I wish it had been a postal order.'

The visitors stood embarrassed, wanting to go, not knowing properly what to do. Pansy went up to them, and pressed against their knees with her little hands, mutely imploring them to be off; then she walked backwards until she reached her mother's side.

'Iya, iya,' screamed the sick baby in a frenzy, and Audrey droned on, with tears creeping slowly down her cheeks,

'He sent me an apple and pear on a plate,  
But I wish it had been a postal order.'

'Let's go,' whispered Bernardine; and the two girls sidled out of the room, saying 'Good morning,' very politely. The singing woman gave a nod, without looking at them, and Pansy waved a solemn hand, as if she were reaching up, blessing everybody.

Once more, the two girls were on the promenade. The tide was going out, and instead of lapping at the sea-wall, the water now made a hissing sound on the shingle. The wind, grown a little stronger, faced them, pressing their cotton dresses close.

'Ooh,' they shuddered, longing for the sunshine to break through.

They seemed to have lost interest in the people around them, even in the many boys and young men who stared at them twice or three times. Lucy suddenly felt envious of a black and white cat which sat underneath a seat, licking itself carefully all over.

'If only you could lick things out of your mind,' she thought despairingly.

Bernardine gave her heavy hair a quick shake, and said in a voice full of meaning, 'I wouldn't marry a pierrot, would you?'

The two young girls looked at each other, and all at once the picture of a pierrot all in red, with a frill around his neck, and three black pompoms, and a well-chalked white hat came into their minds, and a laugh scattered the gloom on their faces.

They stopped for a long time to watch the sea gulls riding on the top of the outgoing waves. First in brief flashes, and then altogether, the June sun came from behind the grey clouds. Leaning against the pungent-smelling railings, they gazed unseeingly across the sparkling waters of the bay towards the blue hills of Cumberland, and dreamed out a future for themselves.

New thoughts broke into their minds like pent springs bursting into a pool, stirring up their old tranquillity. They wanted something that was beautiful all the time, and quite, quite different. Yes, it must be different. With eyes half closed, they pressed themselves closer to the cold iron of the railings, and felt behind them the faint, far away kiss of the sun and the wind.



## *An Idyll*

BY ORLO WILLIAMS

(From *The Criterion*)

### I

THE contemplative stranger seeing old Mr. Banks, the rector of Clune, walking slowly from his grey stone church to his grey stone rectory, clean shaved but for a white moustache, and wearing the white tie natural to the class of sporting parsons of which he is a belated survivor, would observe nothing in him out of keeping with the pastoral peace around him: nor would there appear anything incongruous in the sight of Henry Bishop, in breeches and gaiters, with a gun under his arm, walking under the chestnut trees of the High Farm at Milbury towards the buxom figure of his daughter at the gate. Figures so typical of their surroundings could inspire no comment but one of pleasure at finding humanity so harmonious with nature. To delve in imagination for something untoward in the lives of such thoroughly satisfactory types would appear morbid. Mr. Banks, one would recognize, had been incumbent of Clune for many years, presented by the lord of the manor who lived in Winterbourne Park close by, hunting a little, shooting in his neighbours' coverts, fishing when the may-fly fluttered up, playing cricket and tennis on long summer afternoons, and conducting his cure of souls with a moderate zeal. As years went on, he would have dropped the hunting and then the shooting, and then the cricket, but not for a long time the tennis, while he

probably still played croquet. When he died, another of his type would succeed to Clune Rectory, and perform the same quiet, long-lived cycle, barring, perhaps, the hunting, which is now no sport for poor men. And as for Henry Bishop, the registers of Milbury could show Bishops at High Farm, no doubt, for as many generations as those of some other parish showed generations of the family of farmers from which had sprung his wife. The farmer's life in such a country is always the same — strenuous in act, restful in thought, separated ever from the bustle of mechanical life and the surging of urban hordes. Gentry, farmers, villagers; 'places,' farms, cottages — three unbroken circles of life, meandering smoothly round their placid centre, the Clumber uplands, so gently curved, so smoothly shaped, in which birth, marriage and death might seem not crises, but natural, easy processes.

Yet the fact that the appearance of these figures did not clash with the murmur of the river Clune between its grassy banks or the cooing of the doves round the lichened walls of the High Farm would in truth be the only warrant for idly supposing that the rector, the farmer, and his wife were exempt from the tragedies and disappointments of human life, or indeed that the triple life-cycle of gentry, farmer, and villager was as placid and regular as the beat of the mill-wheel. Such idle suppositions are not entertained by the regular inhabitants, even of idyllic spots, and were certainly not entertained by Henry Bishop, the father of John Bishop, when he stumped about his fields looking shrewdly out of his weather-beaten face, or discussed the affairs of his neighbours at the Swan.

Farmer Bishop, some twenty years ago, was a close man and a prosperous; he had no illusions of a senti

mental kind, either about his surroundings or his neighbours. As for the division of Clumber society into gentry, farmers, and village folk, he would have admitted that readily enough, but without any implication of humility at belonging to the second rank. A farmer's place and a farmer's life, solid and comfortable, were good enough for him, and he had no wish to change them or to encourage any such wish in his children. Farmer Bishop saw things, the gentry in particular, exactly as they were. So, at least, he imagined. Parson, squire, and their kind had as little glamour for him as the picturesque old men of the village, whose present or past capacity for work and beer he knew to a nicety. As a class, landowners seemed to him to be burdened with heavy social obligations and extravagant tastes: their taxes were high, their estates costly to maintain, and they were always wasting half their time in amusement.

For gentle carriage and beauty the farmer had, indeed, an appreciative eye: he knew blood when he saw it, whether in men or beasts. Though he was mildly radical, he was no revolutionary, but honoured in an impersonal way the corporate body of ancestors and living persons which composed the local 'families.'

Towards individuals, however, he could not be so indulgent; how could he, when to his shrewd eye, they exposed themselves so frequently to criticism or pity? Lord Winterbourne, for instance, who owned Winterbourne Park, was very 'queer,' and well known to appear embarrassingly intoxicated on public occasions. The squire of Milbury was discontented and poor, as death duties had weighed heavily on his estate and he had large jointures to pay. He could hardly afford to live in Milbury House except by camping in one or two rooms of the beautiful but ill-arranged old mansion. Mrs. Ferrers,

over at Boughton Grove, had just run away from her husband, who not long afterwards broke his neck out hunting; and Lady Swainson, over at Quainton, when she was not getting up charity entertainments at which she sang comic songs in a cracked voice, certainly consoled herself with spirits. They had all kinds of troubles, the gentry, rich and poor alike; and the poor, when they happened to be parsons, with more duties and far less privileges than squires, aroused in Farmer Bishop's mind no feeling but of rather contemptuous pity. Yes, he had heard many strange stories and seen some queer things in his fifty years at Milbury. Nearly all the gentry seemed fated to come to grief in one way or another: farmers who had a bit of capital and minded their own business never came to grief. If one only waited long enough, so the farmer almost unconsciously put it to himself, every one of them gave you something to laugh at or crow over. Sometimes they had to sell in a hurry, and canny farmers bought a few more acres or animals than they wanted. He liked them well enough as institutions, and touched his hat to them without surliness; they were pleasantly spoken, and their young men in pink and their girls in dainty frocks were quite to be admired, but such children weren't much use to their dads, when all was said and done. Farmer Bishop saw to it that his own children were brought up to be useful.

No fancy education for them, but a few years at the local Grammar School or girls' school, and then back to the farm with them to save something in wages. The boys learned under him the business in which they would spend their lives, and the girls — no governessing for Molly and Ellen, thank you — prepared to be wives of other farmers or to be spinsters, not without value, at the farm which would always have room enough to hold

them. They could look after the chickens and the dairy, the choir and the Sunday School, and decorate the Church for the various festivals.

Mr. Bishop was a drab, self-centred man, with an enormous secret conceit in his own prosperity. Being a widower did not trouble him, nor did the emigration of his younger son to Canada; he was only anxious for John to settle down. John was a handsome lad, rather too fond of enjoying himself, playing tennis and cricket in white trousers when he ought to have been in the fields. It was high time he got married, and his father, leaning heavily upon a gate one summer evening, was pondering possible daughters-in-law, when he saw John walking and whistling along the footpath that led from Milbury to Clune. He wondered if there was anyone in that direction, but shook his head. Never mind, an opportunity would come. Farmer Bishop prided himself on taking opportunities; his opportunities were frequently other people's misfortunes.

## II

Milbury lay on one side of the River Clune, and Clune village lay on the other side, three miles up the stream, beyond the Milbury woods. Both villages with their sisters, Tillington and Upper and Lower Compton, were part of that smiling valley below the high road on the ridge which runs from London to the north-west. Along that road, with its row of double telegraph posts, the currents of the world might pass, but in the valley nothing passed that was swifter than the current of the Clune. John Bishop, carrying a tennis racket, was walking at a very reasonable speed to Tillington Farm whose owner, a rather crushed individual, was obliged to let

the farmhouse in the summer and live in a cottage. The weekly guineas made a difference to him. The summer tenants of Tillington Farm were old Mrs. Hardy, wife of the lately deceased Vicar of Tillington, and her married daughter Mrs. Rennell, whose husband worked in some London office, and came down for week-ends. John Bishop had been asked to tea to make a fourth at tennis with them and Cicely Banks.

It was not the first time he had been to Tillington Farm for this purpose. Sometimes Molly or Ellen went with him, and Farmer Bishop made no objection, though he saw no sense in playing tennis at all, because going to tea with old Mrs. Hardy and her daughter did not in the least outrage his sense of the fitness of things. Mr. Hardy, the son of a cathedral organist, had married the daughter of a prosperous draper in the cathedral town: they had none of the inclinations of a sporting parson who knew all the chief families in the county, but were far more at home with the farmers. The Vicar counted among the gentry and met the Squire on equal terms, but the farmers and their wives never felt out of their element at the Vicarage when Mr. Hardy was alive, and on its lawn their children played unconstrainedly with the young Hardys and the children of other lesser gentry. Even Cicely Banks had played there in childhood, for her mother and father were glad enough to get her off their hands while they went off to play tennis with their own sort. One of their own sort had now come to Tillington Vicarage, and farmers' wives were only to be seen there on special and uncomfortable occasions; but Tillington Farm, when Mrs. Hardy took it, became another borderland in which a young Banks and a young Bishop might play together without noticeable incongruity. Farmer Bishop only shook his head because he thought these

tennis-teas a waste of time; 'gettin' all of a mullock battin' a ball back and forwards over a net leads to nothin' that I can see.' In a general way he was right, but in this particular case, not being aware how the circumstances of life struck young Miss Banks, he made a mistake.

In Cicely's outlook on life in the Clumber Hills there was as little glamour as in Farmer Bishop's; the difference was that Cicely wanted glamour, whereas Farmer Bishop preferred a drab light. The girl had mousy hair, blue eyes, a freckled nose and rather full cheeks with two rosy spots under the eyes that became crimson when she was cross: she had a fine complexion, but she was no beauty, nor was she a passionate, languishing, exciting heroine of romance. Her ordinary little soul was rather starved: everything at Clune Rectory always was rather starved that the selfishness of Mr. Banks might be fed. Mr. Banks had always been quite amiable but quite firm on that point: his views on it had determined his choice of a wife. Having no money of his own and seeing that a country living would not support even the mild tastes of a country gentleman, he had married a bright and florid young lady, the daughter of a by no means aristocratic stockbroker, who had a capacity for devotion and a satisfactory dowry. With these Mr. Banks had at first made himself exceedingly comfortable. Two horses, a smart trap and groom, a fine garden, an excellent cook, and all the entertainment he wanted were his; in return he had accepted his wife with all her limitations and had tolerated, without much interest, the birth of one daughter. About five years after his marriage an uncomfortably large portion of the dowry had disappeared in the failure of a company which also submerged the stockbroker, but Mrs. Banks's devotion remained unimpaired. It was a perfectly menial devotion with very little fine feeling

about it. The stout, red-cheeked woman with restless, staring eyes had fallen a victim to her husband as another woman might have to a fat and lazy cat. She bustled about his comfort from morning till night, relieving herself from the strain of this altruism by gossiping spitefully of every other person in the neighbourhood. This was her only entertainment, for she never rode or played any games herself. Mr. Banks had no wish to be bothered with mounting her in the hunting field, and, as she came nowhere near his standard in tennis or croquet, her place was to sit by the side of the lawn and watch him, faithfully fielding any balls that disappeared into the flower beds.

Cicely did not remember the time of full prosperity. She had not seen the reductions — unavoidable in spite of Mrs. Banks's devotion — the disappearance of the second horse and the gardener, the substitution of an inferior cook and the very obvious deterioration in Mrs. Banks's wardrobe. Her earliest recollections were of a godlike father, admirably clothed whether in broadcloth or shining white flannels, who ate dishes in which other people were not expected to share and went out to all kinds of places where other people were not expected to follow him, besides presiding at services in Church. Mr. Banks's manner in Church was that of an amiable, level-voiced chairman at a general meeting of not very intelligent shareholders. The services had never impressed her much, but the much more fervent ministrations in the Rectory at the shrine of the rector had impressed her immensely. Mrs. Banks had the gift of inspiring all her sub-ministrants, male and female alike, with the same devotion to an urbane but thankless god. She hypnotized them in their revolts so powerfully that they felt it impossible to continue recalcitrant at the awful price of Mr. Banks's discomfort. Mr. Banks never had to command. He had only to say with a



sign, 'I do wish —' or with quiet irony, 'Is the cook really incapable of —?' or quite airily, 'I think the lawn wants rolling,' and his wish was fulfilled, the cook became capable and Mrs. Banks rolled the lawn — she perspired readily in such a cause. Nobody else in the house ever asked for anything; Cicely soon learned that. They got on as cheerfully as they could with what was left for them. So Cicely soon joined her mother in bustling about, rolling, mowing, darning, hunting tennis balls and seeing that the other men who came to play tennis had three cups of tea each and all the sandwiches.

### III

John Bishop's arrival at Tillington Farm was eagerly expected by Mr. and Mrs. Rennell and Cicely, who were desultorily knocking balls to one another. At last he came, in rather tight and yellow flannel trousers, smiling pleasantly from a heavy but handsome face.

'Ah, here you are, John,' cried Mrs. Rennell. 'Come along quick and have a set before tea. We'll take you and Cicely on. Rough or smooth, Cicely?'

The racket was spun.

'Smooth. Smooth it is. Will you serve, John?' said Cicely.

'All right, Miss Cicely,' he answered calmly. As a boy he had called her 'Cicely,' but now he found a certain awkwardness in calling any young woman by an unadorned Christian name. He blushed easily and spoke slowly. He could snub his sisters, but any other young woman could shut him up with a word.

The game went on seriously, almost in silence but for 'well played!', 'yours!' and the calling of the score. The married pair lost, and old Mrs. Hardy called them in to tea.

'You're in good form to-day, Miss Cicely,' was all John ventured.

'Thank you, John. We must beat them again afterwards.' She liked to win, and felt benevolent to her partner, who had played hard and was wiping his brow. She wondered that he got so hot; Mr. Banks played a polished game and never perspired.

Soon after tea tennis was resumed and went on till seven, absorbing all thoughts and energies. When it was over they all felt a little flat and chilly.

'Put on your coat, child,' said Mrs. Rennell. Cicely obeyed, without waiting to see if John Bishop would hold it open for her. He had not learned those little things.

Mrs. Hardy could afford to be hospitable in a homely way: she liked gatherings of young people, for they reminded her of old days at the Vicarage. Couldn't they stay for a bit of supper? Mrs. Banks wouldn't be anxious.

Cicely had never known Mrs. Banks anxious about anybody but her husband, so she stayed. They had cold ham and a jam tart, and talked with animation, chiefly about near neighbours.

At last, good night. Cicely was walking, having punctured the tyre of her bicycle. 'John will go along with you, then,' cackled Mrs. Hardy. 'It's on his way to Milbury.' John said, 'Very pleased, I'm sure,' lifted his hat and held the gate open. They walked some way in unconstrained silence up the road.

The sun had sunk behind the ridge, and the telegraph posts stood up black against the rosy sky. The peace and beauty of a calm summer evening lay upon the countryside: the air, already chillier, was yet full of warm, sweet smells, wafted in gusts, of honeysuckle and hay. More sensitive souls might well have found such loveliness overpowering. To aesthetic beauty theirs were not

sensitive: what brought so many artists to their villages neither of them realized. Yet the spell of the sweet summer dusk lay upon them, and the mellow light brought favour into their faces. John thought Cicely was a pretty girl, and Cicely said, 'What a lovely evening!' taking a long delicious sniff of the air.

'Yes, we shall have fine weather now for a spell,' said John, prosaically.

Cicely, unaccountably, felt herself impelled to talk.

'That means lots more tennis, and walks on the quarries for me. I love walking up there: it's so lovely, and you see so far. Do you ever go for walks, John?'

'No, I can't say I do. I get all the walk I want in the fields, and that's the truth, Miss Cicely.'

'Oh, but it's quite different up in the quarries, and you can sit in the shade of the quarry woods when you're tired. Do you remember how we used to go picnics up there and play hide and seek?'

'When we were kids.' John gave a hoarse laugh. 'There was one time when I hid with you in a bush and kept 'em all looking for half an hour, Miss Cicely.'

Cicely was quiet for a moment, and then she was bold. 'Why do you call me Miss Cicely? It's so silly. I call you John, as I always did, and you must call me Cicely.'

John blushed, looked sideways at her, and said, 'Aw, very well.'

Cicely looked at John, and John looked at Cicely; both smiled. For the first time in her life Cicely thought John was a good-looking boy. John was twenty-four, and he had often kissed girls; never before had he wanted to kiss Cicely. Cicely did not know why her heart began to beat so riotously. They were near the corner where the lane met the road to Clune, at the gate of a meadow.

'Let's rest a minute, John,' she said, 'I'm rather tired.'

She leaned her arm on the gate, and bent her head back. She had a shapely body and a white throat. John came and leaned on the gate close beside her. Cicely brushed a lock away from her temple and looked at him sidelong. She saw admiration in his eyes: at once she loved him.

After a few minutes of silence, they walked on. John might have been bolder had Cicely not been Miss Banks. Cicely was bold again. She looked up and down the road: it was deserted, and the dusk was thickening. 'Let me take your arm up the hill, John.' To her surprise she said it and took his arm. A wave of desire cut through John Bishop. He pressed the warm arm, almost involuntarily, with his own. Somehow, before long, their two hands were interlocked, but their eyes looked away, afraid to see what their hands were doing. But eyes cannot look into space for ever. At the top of the hill, in sight of the village, Cicely gently and slowly withdrew her arm. She had to look at him as she said, 'Thank you, John,' and fire rose up in her cheeks.

'When will you be over our way again?' he asked anxiously.

'I was going to walk to the quarries to-morrow afternoon,' she answered. 'Perhaps your sisters will be in to tea.'

'Ellen's going out with the old man, but Moll will be glad of company.' He went on awkwardly, 'I might meet you on the quarries, maybe.'

'All right, John,' she said softly. 'Good night.'

They shook hands lightly, and Cicely turned in at the Rectory gate, but John's grasp burned in her palm all through a restless night.

Next day they met upon the quarries, and down in a hollow he gave her one kiss, then many more. She kissed him once, and on her way home she cried with all the beauty of it.

So John and Cicely became secret lovers, and their bower was the old grass-grown quarries, where, but for the old shepherd, hardly a man or woman was ever seen. They gave themselves up to passion without calculations or conditions. They put out of sight the ordinary workaday life with which they might one day have to square accounts. Cicely surrendered herself without a tremor to the deep peace that she found in John's arms: it was all like a dream, and she found it impossible to bring her actions to the bar of conscience. Their only fear was discovery, which would mean trouble and separation. It was not so difficult to keep their secret, for in all that wide country there were few eyes to see them, and the eyes that should have been vigilant for Cicely were closed in selfish indifference.

But the secrets of a brother are never safe from sisters. Molly and Ellen were simple, good-natured girls, without spite, and quite prepared for John to have his flirtations. Yet, as Molly remarked, people have eyes in their heads. Sisters' eyes are more than ordinary eyes: they read thoughts and record hidden currents. Let a brother and the lady of his heart tread never so warily on a Sunday at tea, one glance, one tone of the voice, is enough to betray them when two sisters sit at the table.

Said Ellen to Molly: 'Our John's got it bad again.'

'That's plain enough,' answered Molly.

'And what's the good, with a girl like that? He might have had more sense.'

'It's her fault, leading the boy on. I could give her a good slap, stuck-up little thing.'

'But she's just silly about him, poor child. I've seen them walking together on the quarries close as two apples on a tree.'

'How?'

'Dad's glasses.'

'H'm. There'll be trouble when *he* knows.'

Dad knew soon enough: they saw to that.

'Where's the lad?' he asked casually one day. Molly glanced at Ellen.

'Need you ask?' she said petulantly. 'He's up in the quarries along of Cicely Banks.'

'Bless my soul,' said the farmer, 'what's he doin' with her?'

'Spoonin', of course. John's sick for her, and you ought to speak to him, Dad. Someone'll get talking one of these days, and then we'll have Mrs. Banks clattering over here and pretty doings there'll be.'

Farmer Bishop rubbed his chin. Molly prepared fearfully for an explosion that never came.

'Twould be better if Mrs. Banks minded her own business,' he said. 'Let the lad be. 'Twill soon cool off.'

Then he went off and smoked thoughtfully: now and then he chuckled. The Reverend Banks would be none too pleased if he knew: the farmer felt a secret satisfaction at the thought. Miss Cicely was a fine lass, and John would do well if he brought down such a bird. And he was good enough for her, too. To go spoonin' with Miss Banks, Winterbourne blood — he slapped his knee — John was a young spark and no mistake. It might come to nothing, but *he* wasn't going to spare the Bankses any trouble, not he. Time enough to act if things came to a head. Things happened like that, sometimes, in the summer, no matter who it was.

'Twas the girl's look-out, anyway.

He spoke to John in the fields next morning.

'You're after the girls again, I hear, John.'

John blushed and looked stubborn.

'I ask ye no questions,' the farmer went on. 'Have

your fun while you're young. I was a lad myself. But listen, John. Never let a woman get the better of you. Have your own way with 'em. That's what they're made for. I can't bear to see a young fellow ditherin' about women as if he was afraid of them. So long as you stick to farming and get no silly fancies, you can afford to have your play. You've sense in your head, John. But mind, so long as you act straight with me, my lad, I'll back you up, no matter what. Now I'll be off home.'

John said nothing.

Sweets cannot last for ever, but Cicely was unprepared for a sudden end to hers. An aunt in Yorkshire demanded her companionship in August for three months. Mrs. Banks was delighted, and Cicely had to simulate equal delight. Weeping she told John there was only a fortnight before they parted: beyond a fortnight lovers' eyes cannot see. Cicely wept and clung, and John, even, wept a little with her. Desire ran wild within them, and John, unconsciously, remembered his father's words. 'Have your fun while you're young.' They were both young and beside themselves with passion. Cicely yielded herself without a regret. More than once in that fortnight she stole away at dusk to the quarry woods, desperate with longing, and surrendered herself, body and soul, to the man who had won her, and on the last night after a long kiss she tore herself, sobbing, away.

Mr. Banks himself drove her to the station next day, as he was to play tennis near by. He remarked on his return that Cicely looked pale; also that the lawn wanted mowing. Mrs. Banks attended dutifully to the latter remark.

#### IV

It was a blustering night in mid-December. A north-west wind howled in the chimneys of High Farm, like a

lion held at bay by the blazing coals of the heaped-up fire. Molly and Ellen had gone to bed, and Farmer Bishop sat in his kitchen armchair smoking his last pipe. John sat opposite him on the settle, gazing heavily into the coals.

'Farm's done well this year,' said the farmer thoughtfully.

'Aw' — from John.

'Ay, we made a tidy bit. 'Twas a good job we bought them fields off the Squire.'

'Aw.'

'I've a mind to buy that horse and trap of Mainwaring's. He'll be havin' a sale soon, I hear. I always said he wouldn't do no good; no money behind him.'

The farmer slapped his pocket. John said, 'Aw,' again.

'What's up, lad; can't ye speak? Shall we buy that trap?'

'Aw, I dunno. Look here, dad, I'm in a fix.'

'A fix, eh? What, gamblin' and bettin', I suppose?' The farmer's voice was hard.

'No,' said John wearily, 'nothin' to do with money. Cicely Banks, she's back.'

'Still sweet on her, John?'

'It's not that. She's in trouble. She told me yesterday. That's what.' John kept his eyes on the ground, to avoid the wrath which he imagined in his father's eyes. But those hard eyes had a frosty twinkle in them.

'She's in trouble along of you, is she, you young rip? Well, I never. What'll the Reverend Banks say, to be sure, and that meddlesome old woman of his? Nice doin's for the Rectory. Has the girl told 'em yet?'

'She was to tell her mother to-day; said she couldn't keep it secret any more.' John's voice shook a little. 'I've been a bloody fool, dad: what am I to do?'

Farmer Bishop thought for a few moments, and there



was secret pride in his thoughts. A Banks — Winterbourne blood — got with child by his son. Another of the gentry brought low by their own foolishness. He had always felt that the Bankses, inside whose gate he had never been, were of those at whose expense he could afford to wait. Every year the broad acres of High Farm swelled with rich crops and cattle grew fat and multiplied; but nothing grew fat and multiplied at Clune Rectory: there was only a daily dwindling of health and strength and pleasure, and a meagre old age in prospect for such as the Bankses. The girl was a fool, of course, but not such a blasted fool as her mother.

‘Why couldn’t you wait, John, and marry her proper?’ he said. He knew the answer, but was testing his son.

‘Well, so I would have,’ answered John indignantly, ‘but her mother wouldn’t have let her marry a farmer. You know that as well as I do.’

‘Did you ask her?’

‘No, I didn’t. What’d have been the good?’

‘Did you want to?’ John scratched his head.

‘Damned if I know. I was fond enough of the girl.’

‘Well, you were a fool, John, not to know your own mind before you got her in the family way, poor soul: for you’ve got to marry her now, anyway.’

‘Maybe they won’t let her.’

‘Won’t let her? Don’t be such a soft fool!’ The farmer snorted with indignation. ‘A farmer’s son not good enough for Miss Banks, eh? They should ha’ thought of that before. It’s for *we* to say now if we will or we won’t. You mark my words, they’ll be round here fast enough, prayin’ us to make the best of a bad job. I’ll see that cacklin’ woman down on her knees. You keep out of the way, boy; I’ll fix it.

‘But, dad.

'There's no buts about it. All you've got to do is to tell me this — Will you marry the girl and bring her home here? I'd be proud to make her welcome so long as she's a good wife to you and suits herself to High Farm. She'll have to be a farmer's wife and her children farmer's children. Aw, she'll be ashamed at first, of course, and there'll be a bit of gossip; those that outrun the parson have to pay for it. But if she's any spirit she'll face it out and settle down here among us and have her kid. Things blow over quick enough if people keep to themselves and don't go gossiping about in parsons' drawin' rooms. But if you won't bring her here as your wife to bear you children and help you to take over High Farm when I'm gone, not a finger I'll stir for either of you, and there'll be a bastard at Clune Rectory, for she's no money to marry on, no more have you but what I give you. So there, lad: you stick by me and I'll stick by you. Winterbourne blood's good blood, and I like the girl. Now, what's it to be?'

John shuffled his feet a little: then he said:

'Thank ye, dad. I don't want to leave the farm, and I'll marry Cicely and do the square by her. But she wasn't bred to farm, you know, and'll find our ways rough for her, maybe. Then there's Moll an' Ellen . . .'

Farmer Bishop got up and put his hand firmly on John's shoulder. 'Look here, boy: understand this. When men make up their minds, women ha' got to follow. It'll be the worse for them, else. When you're married, your wife'll have to suit her ways to yours. She'll have to learn. Let her start on a right understandin' from the first. I'm master here now, and you'll be master when I'm gone. As for Moll and Ellen, I should hope they'd have sense enough in their heads to make no trouble. There's room for all at High Farm. So don't you fret. There'll be

Mrs. Banks clatterin' over here in the morning, I'll lay. When I've seen her, we can get to business. Good night.'

The farmer stumped off to bed, and John followed him in silence.

As the farmer surmised, Mrs. Banks drove to High Farm next morning. The cheeks of that unfortunate woman for once were pale and her eyes were red: she was feeling ten years older since the afternoon before when Cicely, trembling and sobbing, had told her of the dread which had grown to certainty since her return. To say that Mrs. Banks had been appalled would be a mild statement: her matronly bosom nearly burst with anger and terror. She had assuaged the anger in a torrent of abuse which she poured over the sobbing girl whom she had finally driven in hysterics to her room. The terror had remained. For once hypnotism was useless, menial devotion of no avail. Nothing could parry the fatal blow to Mr. Banks's peace of mind nor put off the awful moment of confession. Awful it had been. With cold bitterness her husband had flayed her; his tongue had cut her like a whip of wire, and with a lively sarcasm he had sketched to her the picture of himself, rector of Clune, cousin to Lord Winterbourne, his own parishioner, exposed to the evil tongues of his neighbours through the stupidity of his idiotic wife and the wickedness of his worthless daughter. When he had reduced her to pulp, he informed her that he would never see his daughter again, and that arrangements must be made as soon as possible to remove her from the house, meanwhile she should keep to her room. Mrs. Banks might make what other arrangements she pleased for the girl's future, but, whether married or unmarried, she was never to come into Clune Rectory as long as he lived.

Haunted by the memory of this awful night, Mrs.

Banks drove up to the door of High Farm to claim what justice she could for her still weeping daughter. Being a woman of spirit, though a fool, she entered snorting: Farmer Bishop received her with grave politeness.

‘Good day, ma’am. Won’t you sit down?’

Mrs. Banks flounced down on a hard chair in the parlour and began in a fury:

‘This is a very serious matter, Mr. Bishop. I can hardly tell you what a dreadful thing has happened. Cicely — your good-for-nothing son has — has betrayed her. She only told me yesterday. Her father and I are furious.’

‘Bless my soul, Mrs. Banks,’ said the farmer, ‘this is bad news. Do I understand you to say my John has been makin’ love to Miss Cicely?’

‘Making love, indeed! Worse than that, he’s betrayed her, I tell you, and there’s the poor girl sobbing and crying in her room all because of this low young son of yours.’

‘Well, ma’am, I’m sorry, I wouldn’t ha’ thought a young girl so well brought up and so well looked after by her mother’ — Mrs. Banks went crimson — ‘would have given a farmer’s son the chance of carryin’ on with her. However, the harm’s done now, and can’t be helped. Least said soonest mended. I’ll forbid him to see her any more, the young rascal.’

Mrs. Banks nearly leapt out of her chair.

‘My good man, I tell you she’s going to have a *baby*! Something must be done at once. They’ll have to be married, don’t you see?’

The farmer looked very grave, and paused a moment. The words came slowly out of his mouth. ‘That’s awkward, to be sure. Ye see, I looked for John to marry a girl that’d bring him a bit o’ money. A farmer wants

cah-pital. Now, if John marries Miss Cicely, what'll they marry on? Will she bring any money with her? And where would they live?' He rubbed his short grey beard reflectively.

'How can you talk like that,' Mrs. Banks burst out, 'as if it didn't matter what has happened? Of course, we must try to arrange something and find them a home somewhere. It might be better for them to emigrate and start fresh in Canada; of course Cicely can't live in this neighbourhood. But we can settle all that later. The chief thing is to marry them now, don't you see?'

'I don't see,' the farmer answered shortly. 'Tell me this, what will they live on? Who's to start them farmin' in Canada? Is Mr. Banks puttin' any money down?'

Mrs. Banks hesitated and crumpled her handkerchief nervously.

'Not a penny, I lay,' the farmer went on remorselessly. 'Parsons have no money, and your husband's a near man, well I know. What you're askin', not to say orderin', me to do is to let my son marry a young girl without sixpence to her name, whether I like it or not, and put down the cash to keep them till they can keep themselves, without a word of thanks. You want me to let John go away from High Farm because it wouldn't do for the Reverend Banks to have a daughter that's married a farmer livin' near him. If that's it you may go back to Mr. Banks at once and tell him I won't do it. John can marry the girl if he wants to, but if it's to be on those terms he don't get sixpence from me.'

Mrs. Banks made an effort to pull herself together for one final onslaught which should carry the stubborn farmer, as she had carried many a stubborn cook, off his feet; but, weakened as she was by her husband's much more deadly onslaught of the night before and by the

realization of the hopelessness of her position, she dropped in the moment of her spring and began to cry.

'Don't be so hard, Mr. Bishop: it's more than I can bear. Everyone's against me, even my own husband. I know I haven't been a good mother to Cicely, but think of the poor girl. Oh, what am I to do, what am I to do?'

'Don't take on so, ma'am,' said the farmer. 'Listen here to what I say. John told me all about it last night, and I told him he must act square by the girl. But that's no reason why he should leave home and the farm I've been keeping for him and his children. He shall marry Cicely, and he shall bring her back here to be a farmer's wife and be of some use in the world instead of gossipin' and tennis-playin'. We shan't talk spitefully of her, as her own folk will, but I'll welcome her as my own daughter and, for all she's outrun the parson, Mrs. John Bishop'll hold up her head at High Farm. Not a penny will I take with her; Mr. Banks spends all he's got, I warrant. But mind this — my son's wife will live in her station. I'll not have her hangin' about on sufferance on the skirts of the gentry. She's given herself to a farmer's son and a farmer's wife she'll be, livin' with farmers, seein' farmers and bringin' farmers into the world. It is good-bye to fal-lals for her, and a good job too. If she's the girl I take her for she'll do it, and John shall go and ask her to-day. And if Parson Banks can't put up with the shame of havin' his daughter marry a son of mine, well, let him go elsewhere: 'twill be small loss to Clune.'

Mrs. Banks sniffed on, overcome and helpless. She had to agree, and home she went to face another blizzard from her husband's tongue, and to make arrangements for smuggling the sinner to a friend's house in the cathedral town. There, before long, the marriage was performed in a registry office, and the news had hardly burst on the

astonished ears of all that dwell in Clune Valley, when Mrs. John Bishop made her entry into High Farm.

Life was not all roses for her. Many and many a time the martingale of circumstance brought her head down with a sharp jerk. If the contemplative stranger were to ask her now what was left of her young daydreams, she might smile bleakly. And yet, he would say, she is not unhappy. She has long been at home in High Farm, its mistress and the mother of its heirs. Love soon fled, but a rough kindness remained. It was a 'shocking thing,' said the gentry, and Mr. Banks never relented: yet the aches and the smarts of it all have long grown old. They have been absorbed into the calm, grey peace of the Clumber Hills, and that same peace has settled on the faces of all those who made and suffered them. The peace of the grave is on Mrs. Banks, and upon Farmer Bishop it will soon fall. For twelve years now he has sat, half imbecile, in his chimney corner, struck down at the height of his pride through a fall from his horse. For twelve years Cicely has tended him, fed him and learned to understand his inarticulate mouthings. She calls him 'Dad,' and wipes his bleary old eyes when he sometimes cries, remembering the man he was. And John himself is at peace. When his wife gets into one of her 'tempers' he walks out whistling into the fields. He knows there will be peace for those who wait patiently, the peace of the Clumber Hills that can heal so many scars, grow over them, soften their edges with its rains and dim their rawness with its delicate lights, till what is left of them becomes part of itself, blunted and lichenized as the Clumber stone.

## *Intimations of Immortality*

BY ROMER WILSON

(From *The Adelphi*)

I NEVER did see a ghost that fulfilled my expectations of what a ghost should be. I never saw any frail mist in human form glide between me and an opposite wall; I never saw anything horrid, nor heard anything horrid, nor felt queer at the knees, and yet I suppose if any of you round the fire had seen a man standing on air two feet above the waving surface of a field of ripe corn, as I did once down Dover way, you would call it a ghostly and unnatural sight. The man was in full kit and as solid as this chair — at least he looked it. The sun was blazing down and the sea in the distance was as smooth as wax and a good slate colour. There was three parts of a diaphanous moon in the sky, and all of me in a two-seater car white with afternoon dust and as thirsty as may be. This is a war story — I mean it happened then when Death was mobilized, the hounds of Death were out to kill, and they got that chap in the cornfield that afternoon in a wood over yonder that began with a P — Lord, how short memory is! — in July 1916.

That is all regulation, of course. I knew directly I saw him he was off the ground for ever and a day, and I had a slight qualm. Either he or I cared more for the other than either of us knew. I had always felt he was a man you could trust not to waste an inch of life, and I daresay that is the best you can say of anybody. That is not the end of the story, by any means, not that I have any story to tell you. I was not afraid, but then I am not afraid in



churchyards after dark. I do not care for a Campo Santo or for a field of Mars. In the Champs de Mars in Paris I feel blue, there's a sound there of men's feet drilling, a regular bad habit of a sound; living men made it — dead men's feet have no sound, you know. There is a good set of sounds like that in the world — but that has nothing to do with this rigmarole.

Well, I had no sooner gone to bed that self-same night — and fallen asleep or not, it doesn't matter which — when I walked John Symonds and sat down on a cane chair as naturally as possible. He took out a cigarette and began to smoke; lit it with a French match.

'Good heavens!' said I, slowly, 'you are dead, John. You went out of it this afternoon; I saw you.'

'Dead as mutton, Charles,' he answered me. 'When I'm through with these forty-nine cigarettes I shan't get another smoke for Eternity.'

He spoke as quietly as a child breathing asleep.

'It is very interesting,' he went on, and I leaned up on my elbow in bed and watched him with a deep soothed feeling in my vitals. 'It is very interesting, Charles. They shot me here clean as a whistle under the proverbial rib. It is not missing. I used to count it in my bath, and I know now for certain God never did make woman of man's bone. They were made at once, man and woman, at once and for ever and ever. I had a quiet shock when I was shot, Charles, as quiet as the down-stroke of a well-oiled piston. Death slid into me like that and I slid out of my body in exact facsimile of myself and stood above it in the air, and then I tried to go home but did not get beyond Dover in a field of corn. They kept me in France until my body was buried. They kept me till half an hour ago, and then I came on soft wings here where it is familiar — where I know my way about — where I loved to be.

That little picture, that chest, they always pleased me, soothed me — how soft everything seems now — I can hear, but the first thing that I lost, Charles, was my sense of sound, yet I hear — infinitely, even the grass growing, and it is all a part of quietness.'

'Why to me?' I suddenly asked, 'why not go home?' I felt afraid all at once that he was making a fearful mistake or that I was, that I had no right to him since he had wife, kids, mother, sisters, brothers, a full set of relations, some of whom worshipped him, or thought they did.

'I don't know quite,' he answered. 'All men and women seem mother and brother and wife to me now, and it is easy to come here: you never wished to eat me when I was alive, besides you have left things pretty much as they were. But I am home too — they have moved my books, you know — tell them they shouldn't, not for nine days, at any rate, it confuses me. I can't find my way. They changed half the furniture round since May. Charles, I shall fade, you know, out of sense and time soon; in nine months I shall be faded away. I don't want anyone to suffer for me. I can help my family if they leave things alone. I can come back a little and comfort them. Then I will go. I like your flat — always did. It has intimations of immortality. They used to haunt me sweetly before I died.'

John Symonds looked up and smiled at me. I laughed.

'I shan't forget your smile,' I said. 'It will be the last thing to go, you Cheshire cat!'

To my surprise tears began to pour out of my eyes.

'What the devil am I crying for?'

'Me,' said John. 'It seems such a pity, doesn't it? Well, it is a pity, but I am happy in the indescribable joy of love and a deliciousness like a spring morning — perfectly pure. We are sorry when our bodies are badly hurt,

limbs badly torn, but mine is without blemish — just that.' He showed me a burn in his tunic, over his heart. 'I wish they were all buried, it gives no chance to come on leave when they let you lie about — last leave — sounds like music-hall clap-trap. I should like to go to the Oxford again and hear Marie Lloyd. By God, I should! She also knew a thing or two of what — intimated it — the immortal thing — I am to have — I have not the ghost of a notion where or how. The force that spins earth in heaven. For God's sake, live, Charles, even if you burst your bowels — and look here, Charles — soothe me, me — yes, soothe me, I am still capable of agony — soothe me by giving up delay.'

'Good Lord!' I said, 'you have taken up sky-pilotry! I sometimes suspected you had the boys' brigade enwombed somewhere about you.'

'I got waiting on the brain, I suppose, out there,' said John, meekly, 'but my human time sense is going with all sense and nonsense, and soon I also shall be part of the song of God, and shall be and shall be — a deep sea roars soundlessly from the well of heaven up, you know, very dark blue and spreads boundlessly.' John spread his arms out. 'That is somehow — like a white yacht, like a spotless clean tablecloth, like a new enormous drift of snow. God will spread out his garment and in it you will find out all about it and recognize these bits — Marie Lloyd, and the best wine from Italy, and song — Ho, ho, ho, Charles, don't be afraid of soiling your lily-soul, but beware of fairy green! God is not very fond of heart-cold prayer, doesn't like the pattern of Brussels carpets on children's knees, but He does seem somehow to like the lush joyful gilding you and I despised in many a church. He has, I must say, abominable taste — He IS the rest, the other you know, and hangs Blake's pictures in absolute

original and your unwritten poems and my undone deeds in his soul's soul, but in the cool of the evening He comes down and as like as not tenderly fingers the silver hearts they hang round the heart of His Son's mother. The Holy Ghost smiles kindly. God is a very old man. Was that a cock-crow, Charles?'

'No, John,' I answered, truthfully, 'it was a motor horn in Piccadilly.'

'Shall I hear a cock in this flat?'

'As likely as not,' I said. 'Sit still, there's no sign of dawn yet. There is a mews at the back of here, certain to keep hens.'

'Certain to keep hens. Kept hawks once. I shan't be seeing much more of you, Charles. Keep on — for God's sake, go straight at it! Don't tell lies. Anyhow, do what you want. The betting is only three to one against truth if you go that way. Do what you damn well want. Your family and so on will have to know some day that love cannot be stuck down like rouge on any single one face. If you have any it belongs to the lot of us. Like Marie Lloyd, like Chaplin too, Charlot — Charlie Chaplin — I'd give a lot to have thrown a custard pie casually at Kitchener. It would have won the war. By Jove, it would, and God, when they shot me for treason, would have given me the D.S.O.'

'Good heavens, Death has gone to your head, John,' I exclaimed, full of joyfulness, and as glad as ever I was in my life. 'Death has turned your brain, old chap.'

'I own I was a little elated, just a little, as if I had drunk two or three glasses of something A1. I shall hear that cock crow?'

'You told me just now you could hear the grass grow. Surely you will hear that bird.'

'The Holy Ghost comes rushing though my head at

times and I faint a little. Henry Charles Mary, whoever you are dimly there, it tires me, but soon I shall not be tired any more. I shall be born again, Henry Charles Mary Philip — and many another — all, of course.'

'You are wandering a little, John,' I said, tenderly.

'A mere intimation — a half handful of suggestions you can recognize, but there is life and life and death and may-be another cycle of existence between . . . I like that picture, Blake cut it on a wet afternoon, and since then how many lives has it entered, entered and begot — intimations of — waifs of the Holy Ghost, immortal. . . .'

I did not see him go. I did not know that he had gone until morning. I may have passed out of life for a while at his side. I do not remember his last words. He is the only ghost ever I saw. Couldn't be frightened at his presence, some ghosts frighten by absence, he did perhaps — I don't know. Beyond me to unravel the stuff he talked; there was an infinite great deal more than he ever said came behind his words, overflowed and swamped me. I swam up to the surface, but those dark waters, though I swam, buoyed up gloriously awhile, came over my head in a great dark tide again, and I had the sense to know I must drown amidst them somehow if ever I was to sail my ship over 'em from here to there, where the devil ever that is, even God doesn't know, I bet you, but only the Holy Ghost, who is the one fellow in Heaven or earth that has moved over the face of those waters — intact.



THE YEAR-BOOK OF THE BRITISH  
IRISH, AND COLONIAL SHORT STORY  
MAY 1, 1930, TO APRIL 30, 1931





## THE BEST BRITISH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL SHORT STORIES

MAY 1, 1930, TO APRIL 30, 1931

NOTE.—*Only stories by British, Irish, and Colonial authors are listed. American, British, Irish, and Colonial periodicals have been reviewed. Canadian stories are listed separately in the American year-book. While every endeavour has been made to indicate the nationality of authors correctly, I assume no personal responsibility for the accuracy of my classification in this or in other lists.*

ANGLIN, NORMAN.

Cuckoo! Manchester Guardian. May 21, '30.

ARMSTRONG, MARTIN.

Mrs. Colenso's Daughter. Story-Teller. Aug., '30.

Mrs. Noah's Ark. New Statesman. Oct. 11, '30.

Shepherd's Tale. Time and Tide. Dec. 20, '30.

B., M.

One Night More. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 17, '30.

Proposal at the Rectory. Manchester Guardian.  
Apr. 2, '31.

Salon. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 10, '30.

B., R.

Heat Wave. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 24, '30.

BARKER, NUGENT.

Strange Disappearance of Monsieur Chabo. Life and  
Letters. Jan., '31.

BATES, H. E.

Charlotte Esmond. Criterion. Oct., '30.

Country Sale. Fortnightly Review. Jan., '31.

Hessian Prisoner. Fortnightly Review. Mar., '31.

On the Road. *New Statesman and Nation*. Feb. 28, '31.

Threshing Day for Esther. *John o' London's Weekly*. Oct. 11, '30.

BENNETT, ARNOLD.

Venus Rising from the Sea. *Story-Teller*. Nov., '30.

BENSON, STELLA.

Dream. *Nation and Athenæum*. Aug. 9, '30.

Desert Islands. *Fortnightly Review*. Jul., '30.

Harper's Magazine. Jun., '30.

On the Contrary. *Bystander*. Aug. 6, '30.

Tchotl. *Bystander*. Xmas No., '30.

BLACKWOOD, ALGERNON.

Revenge. *Radio Times*. Dec. 19, '30.

Shocks. *Strand Magazine*. Sept., '30.

BLOOM, URSULA.

Senility of Youth. *Saturday Review (London)*. Aug. 30, '30.

BOYD, DONALD.

Remembered Spot. *Manchester Guardian*. Sept. 5, '30.

Something to Remember. *Manchester Guardian*. Apr. 10, '31.

Twenty. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 30, '30.

BROADBRIDGE, HUGH.

Shilling. *Saturday Review (London)*. Dec. 6, '30.

BROOME, DORA M.

Again. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 31, '30.

Hibernation. *Manchester Guardian*. Feb. 3, '31.

Old Maid's Story. *Everyman*. Nov. 6, '30.

BULLETT, GERALD.

Torch. *John o' London's Weekly*. Dec. 6, '30.

BURGESS, ELLEN.

Indecision. *English Review*. Sept., '30.

BURKE, THOMAS.

Beautiful End. *Vanity Fair*. Nov., '30.

C., A.

Interval. *Manchester Guardian*. May 7, '30.

C., E.

Youth. *Manchester Guardian*. May 5, '30.

CALTHROP, DION CLAYTON.

Conversations in an Inn. *Saturday Review* (London).

Jan. 17, '31.

CASE, JUSTIN.

Execution. *G. K.'s Weekly*. Dec. 6, '30.

CHEKE, MARCUS.

Louis Quinze Clock. *Life and Letters*. Dec., '30.

CHESTERTON, G. K.

Green Man. *Story-Teller*. Jan., '31. *Ladies' Home Journal*, Nov., '30.

CLEWES, W. D. A.

Night in San Cristobal. *Saturday Review* (London).

Mar. 21, '31.

COLLINS, NORMAN R.

Coincidence. *John o' London's Weekly*. Jun. 7, '30.

Story without a Plot. *London Mercury*. Jul., '30.

CONDON, NINA.

Matt Sweeney's Penance. *John o' London's Weekly*.

Jan. 17, '31.

Mercy of Miss Montgomery. *Everyman*. Dec. 4, '30.

Potato Digger. *John o' London's Weekly*. Mar. 14, '31.

Scandal at Corraghwee. *John o' London's Weekly*.

Sept. 13, '30.

COPPARD, A. E.

Idle Frumkin. *Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine*. Sept., '30.

- Post Office and the Serpent. Spectator. Nov. 22, '30.
- COTMAN, D. J.  
Enemy. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 13, '31.
- COYLE, KATHLEEN.  
Limit. This Quarter. Apr.-Jun., '30.  
Vagrance. This Quarter. Jan.-Mar., '31.
- DARLING, LORD.  
Ignis Fatuus. London Mercury. Nov., '30.
- DATALLER, ROGER.  
Winder. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 3, '31.
- DAVIES, RHYS.  
Blodwen. This Quarter. Apr.-Jun., '31.  
Death in the Family. London Mercury. Aug., '30.  
New Garment. English Review. Jul., '30.
- DE CASALIS, JEANNE.  
Doctor. Saturday Review (London). Feb. 14, '31.
- DE LA MARE, WALTER.  
Miss Miller. Story-Teller. Aug., '30.  
Orgy. Blackwood's Magazine. Jun., '30. Yale Review. Jun., '30.
- DENNIS, S. L.  
Second Awakening of a Magician. London Mercury. Nov., '30.
- DOYLE, LYNN.  
Tale of a Cocktail. Strand Magazine. Nov., '30.  
White Magic. Strand Magazine. Dec., '30.
- DU MAURIER, DAPHNE.  
'Mazie.' Saturday Review (London). Feb. 28, '31.  
Panic. Saturday Review (London). Jan. 3, '31.
- DUNSANY, LORD.  
Charm against Thirst. Harper's Bazaar (N.Y.). Apr., '31.

BRITISH AND IRISH STORIES 339

Drink at a Running Stream. Harper's Bazaar (London). Apr., '31.

Electric King. Harper's Magazine. Aug., '30.

Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine. Apr., '31.

Large Diamond. Britannia and Eve. Mar., '31.

Lost Romance. Harper's Magazine. Apr., '31.

Mermaid's Husband. Cosmopolitan. Oct., '30.

Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine. Dec., '30.

Queer Island. Harper's Magazine. Sept., '30.

Harper's Bazaar (London). Nov., '30.

Showman. Harper's Magazine. Dec., '30.

Sultan's Pet. Harper's Bazaar (N.Y.). Nov., '30.

EDMONDSON, ARNOLD.

In the Know. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 2, '30.

ERTZ, SUSAN.

You Got to Live. Saturday Evening Post. Dec. 27, '30.

FEIWEL, R. J.

Escape. Cornhill Magazine. Jun., '30.

FISHER, A. E.

Night at Sligo's. Midland. Jan.-Feb., '31.

FLEMING, PETER.

Two Fugitives. Fortnightly Review. Apr., '31.

FREEMAN, H. W.

Right of Way. London Mercury. May, '30.

G., E. A.

Gentry. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 13, '31.

G., K. C.

Japanese Adventure. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 25, '30.

GALLAGHER, FRANK.

Valley Road. *Nation* (Dublin). Dec. 13, '30.

GALSWORTHY, JOHN.

Buckles of Superior Dosset. *Yale Review*. Sept., '30.

Cry of Peacock. *Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine*. Aug., '30. *Delineator*, May, '30.

Dromios. *Story-Teller*. May, '30.

Forsyte Encounters the People. *Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine*. Sept., '30.

Francie's Fourpenny Foreigner. *Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine*. May, '30.

Nicholas Rex. *Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine*. Jun., '30. *Delineator*. Jul., '30.

Sands of Time. *Good Housekeeping* (London). Aug., '30. *Delineator*. Aug., '30.

Sorrows of Tweetyman. *Chicago Tribune*. Aug. 24, '30.

Timothy's Narrow Squeak. *Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine*. Jun., '30. *Delineator*. Jun., '30.

GARNETT, DAVID.

Grasshoppers Come. *Story-Teller*. Apr., '31.

Terrible Day. *Life and Letters*. Feb., '31.

GIBBONS, STELLA.

Visiting Moon. *John o' London's Weekly*. Nov. 29, '30.

GOSSMAN, OLIVER.

Penny Whistle. *Story*. Apr.-May, '31.

GRIFF, ALAN.

Sweet Day So Cool. *Colour*. Jun., '30.

H., K.

Andalusia in Blackton. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 15, '30.

BRITISH AND IRISH STORIES 341

HADFIELD, JOHN.

Jealous. Everyman. Mar. 26, '31.

HAMPSON, JOHN.

Sight of Blood. Life and Letters. Apr., '31.

HEPPLE, ANNE.

Playactress. Time and Tide. Aug. 23, '30.

HIGHET, GILBERT.

Here come the Soldiers. Farrago. Feb., '30.

HUTCHINSON, RAY CORYTON.

In the Dark. English Review. May, '30.

INCE, M.

Devil in the Cowshed. Manchester Guardian. May  
13, '30.

JACKSON, P. HOOLE.

Survivors. Manchester Guardian. May 30, '30.

JOHNSON, GEOFFREY.

Dissolving Partnership. English Review. Nov., '30.

JOYCE, MICHAEL.

Perchance to Dream. London Mercury. Dec., '30.

KAYE, LOUIS.

'Five Men Went Out.' Story-Teller. Jan., '31.

KELLY, THOMAS.

Diagnosis. Manchester Guardian. May 19, '30.

Found Drowned. Empire Review. Jan., '31.

Promise. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 17, '31.

KIPLING, RUDYARD.

Debt. Story-Teller. Jun., '30.

Great Play Hunt. Cassell's Magazine. Sept., '30.

Manner of Men. London Magazine. Sept., '30.

Miracle of Saint Jubanus. Story-Teller. Dec., '30.

'Thy Servant a Dog.' Cassell's Magazine. Aug., '30.

Liberty, Jun. 7, '30.

Unprofessional. Story-Teller. Oct., '30.

KYLE, ELISABETH.

Flame. Colour. Oct., '30.

Josepha. Colour. Nov., '30.

L., M.

Heat. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 11, '30.

LACON WATSON, E. H.

Daughter of the Archdeacon. Life and Letters. Apr., '31.

LAWRENCE, C. E.

Sir Chumley Marchbanks. John o' London's Weekly. Feb. 14, '31.

LOWRY, MALCOLM.

Punctum Indifferens Skibet Gaar Videre. Experiment. Spring, '31.

LYND, SYLVIA.

Sybarite. Everyman. Jan. 15, '31.

MACCARTHY, J. BERNARD.

Bishop in the Family. Manchester Guardian. Jun. 24, '30.

MALLETT, RICHARD.

Last Straw. John o' London's Weekly. Nov. 22, '30.

MANHOOD, H. A.

Lonely Camp. Blackwood's Magazine. Mar., '31.

MANNING-SANDERS, GEORGE.

Birthday. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 31, '31.

Boat. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 23, '30.

Chair. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 27, '30.

Foreigners. Everyman. Jan. 1, '31.

Leaflet. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 22, '30.



BRITISH AND IRISH STORIES 343

Letter. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 20, '31.

Mr. Pellew's Dilemma. Everyman. Nov. 27, '30.

Needles and Pins. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 20, '31.

Riddle. Dublin Magazine. Apr.-Jun., '31.

Salvage. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 11, '30.

Stickler. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 15, '31.

Thief. Everyman. Oct. 23, '30.

Wreck. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 10, '30.

MARTIN, CLARA.

'Ordeal by Fire.' John o' London's Weekly. Jun. 21, '30.

MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET.

Human Element. Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine. Jan., '31. Cosmopolitan. Dec., '30.

Vessel of Wrath. Cosmopolitan. Apr., '31.

Virtue. Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine. Mar., '31. Cosmopolitan. Feb., '31.

MAYNE, ETHEL COLBURN.

Ugliness. New Statesman. Sept. 27, '30.

MERRICK, LEONARD.

Promenades of Monsieur Poy. Strand Magazine. Mar., '31. Cosmopolitan. Mar., '31.

METCALFE, JOHN.

Judas. London Mercury. Oct., '30.

Spanish Hat. Scribner's Magazine. Dec., '30.

MILLIN, SARAH GERTRUDE.

New House. Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine. Mar., '31.

MILLS, MARTIN.

Cat's Tail. Adelphi. Mar., '31.

MITCHISON, NAOMI.

At Plane Tree Grove. Time and Tide. Jan. 24, '31.

Buying a Secretary. New Statesman. Jun. 7, '30.

Prince. Time and Tide. Oct. 4, '30.

To the Glory of Ashur. Time and Tide. Dec. 13, '30.

War Ship Sails. Time and Tide. Jan. 3, '31.

MONKHOUSE, ALLAN N.

Ugly Little Man. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 2, '31.

MORROUGH, E. R.

Treasure in the Dune. London Mercury. Oct., '30.

MUGGERIDGE, T. M.

Rev. Rideout. New Statesman. May 24, '30.

O., H.

Accident. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 24, '31.

O'FLAHERTY, LIAM.

Lovers. Harper's Magazine. Apr., '31.

O'GRADY, S. C.

Herd Call. G. K.'s Weekly. Apr. 18, '31.

P., F.

Uncle Bertram. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 21, '30.

P., F. T.

Nothing Much. Manchester Guardian. May 28, '30.

PAVEY, L. A.

Question of Balance. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 27, '31.

PEMBER, EVELYN.

Little Soldier. Everyman. Sept. 4, '30.

PHILLPOTTS, EDEN.

'Crustacean.' Pearson's Magazine. Sept., '30.

Devil and the Deep Sea. Pearson's Magazine. Jul., '30.

Lady Mary's Rubies. Pearson's Magazine. Oct., '30.

Wise Woman. Story-Teller. Jun., '30.

PIER, FLORIDA.

Bigger and Worse Lies. This Quarter. Apr.-Jun., '31.

Pray for the Princess. Life and Letters. Jan., '31.

POWYS, T. F.

Like Paradise. Window. Jul., '30.

Papered Parlour. This Quarter. Jul.-Sept., '30.

PRIESTLEY, J. B.

That Quarter. This Quarter. Apr.-Jun., '31.

PRITCHETT, V. S.

Agranti, for Lisbon. Fortnightly Review. Aug., '30.

Serious Question. Fortnightly Review. Feb., '31.

Slooter's Vengeance. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.

R., F. A.

Zero. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 17, '30.

REA, LORNA.

Two-part Fugue. Good Housekeeping (London).  
Sept., '30.

RICHARDSON, ANTHONY.

Bert's Susan's Clara. Pearson's Magazine. Jun., '30.

RICHARDSON, DOROTHY M.

Ordeal. Window. Oct., '30.

RIDDELL, CHARLES.

'Judge.' Cornhill Magazine. Jun., '30.

RIEU, E. V.

Prendergast. Fortnightly Review. Sept., '30.

ROLT, BERNARD.

Ma'm'selle Rosalie. English Review. Feb., '31.

SACKVILLE-WEST, V.

. Poet. Life and Letters. Apr., '31.

SALFELD, FREDERICK.

Escape. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 27, '31.

Theft. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 18, '30.

SAXELBY, B. NOEL.

Browowne and Barker. *Manchester Guardian*. Dec. 22, '30.

SHIRLEY, ANTHONY.

Young Man with Two Heads. *Saturday Review* (London). Apr. 11, '31.

SIMS, ALAN.

Rabbit Wire. *Everyman*. Mar. 12, '31.

SIMPSON, J. E. S. (*South Africa*).

Folded Arms. *Cape Argus*. Mar. 22, '30.

SITWELL, OSBERT.

Alive-Alive Oh! *Life and Letters*. Jun., '30.

Echoes. *Fortnightly Review*. Aug., '30.

SMITH, ASHLEY.

Courting. *Adelphi*. Dec., '30.

SMITH, LADY ELEANOR.

Mrs. Raeburn's Waxwork. *London Mercury*. Mar., '30.

SPROSTON, S.

Proof. *Saturday Review* (London). Dec. 6, '30.

STEAD, JOYCE.

Comfort. *Manchester Guardian*. Aug. 19, '30.

STRONG, L. A. G.

Aria. *Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine*. May, '30.

Death of the Gardener. *John o' London's Weekly*.

Nov. 8, '30. *Bookman* (N. Y.) Mar., '31.

Departure. *Miscellany*. May, '30.

Honeymoon Couple. *Good Housekeeping* (London).

Apr., '31. *Forum*. Feb., '31.

Paid. *John o' London's Weekly*. Mar. 7, '31.

Parsons, Parsons! *John o' London's Weekly*. Oct.

18, '30.

Stoke Dendle Win the Cup. *John o' London's*

*Weekly*. Jun. 14, '30.

T., C.

Here Is Emily. Manchester Guardian. Jun. 9, '30.

T., L. D.

Artist in the Market Place. Manchester Guardian.

Feb. 24, '31.

T., W.

Exodus. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 16, '30.

THORNDIKE, RUSSELL.

November the Thirteenth. This Quarter. Jan.-

Mar., '31.

TRAILL, PETER.

Man Who Was Alone. Saturday Review (London).

Dec. 27, '30.

TUCKER, EISELL E.

Haunting of Headinger. John o' London's Weekly.

Mar. 28, '31.

W.

In Tow. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 2, '30.

W., R. E.

Bonfire. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 4, '30.

WALPOLE, HUGH.

Carnation for the Old Man. Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine. Aug., '30.

Green Shining Tree. Harper's Bazaar (London.)

Aug., '30. Harper's Bazaar (N.Y.). Aug., '30.

Last Trump. Virginia Quarterly Review. Jul., '30.

Lilac. Good Housekeeping (London.) Aug., '30.

Good Housekeeping (N.Y.) May, '30.

Spanish Dusk. Nash's — Pall Mall Magazine. Dec., '30. Yale Review. Sept., '30.

WARD-JACKSON, W. A.

Wedding Present. London Mercury. Jan., '31.

WARNER, OLIVER.

Silence Returns. *New Statesman*. Nov. 15, '30.

WARNER, SYLVIA TOWNSEND.

How to Succeed in Life. *Everyman*. Jun. 19, '30.

Over the Hill. *Time and Tide*. Mar. 21, '31.

Son. *Atlantic Monthly*. Feb., '31.

WHITAKER, MALACHI.

Cold Grouse in the Larder. *Now and Then*. Summer, '30.

Curtain. *John o' London's Weekly*. Mar. 21, '31.

End of the Queue. *John o' London's Weekly*. Jul. 5, '30.

Lonely One. *John o' London's Weekly*. Dec. 6, '30.

No Luggage. *John o' London's Weekly*. Aug. 16, '30.

Postal Order. *Adelphi*. Oct., '30.

Spring Day at Slater's End. *John o' London's Weekly*. Apr. 25, '31.

WILLARD, BARBARA.

Emily Alone. *Everyman*. Apr. 16, '31.

WILLIAMS, ORLO.

Idyll. *Criterion*. Jul., '30.

WILSON, ROMER.

Intimations of Immortality. *Adelphi*. Nov., '30.

Poor Relation. *Story*. Apr.-May, '31.

Tender Advice. *Pagany*. Jan.-Mar., '31.

Uncles. *London Mercury*. Dec., '30.

## ARTICLES ON THE SHORT STORY IN BRITISH AND IRISH PERIODICALS

MAY 1, 1930, TO APRIL 30, 1931

Aldington, Richard.

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Sept. 27, '30.  
(35:772.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Sept.  
11, '30. (29:714.) Apr. 2, '31. (30:272.)

By Elizabeth Bibesco. *Week-end Review*. Sept. 20,  
'30. (2:398.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. *Spectator*. Mar. 14, '31. (420.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Mar. 15, '31. (iv.)

By I.L. Time and Tide. Apr. 18, '31. (12:474.)

By James Laver. *Week-end Review*. Apr. 4, '31.  
(3:514.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*.  
Sept. 12, '30. (7.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

By B. S. *Manchester Guardian*. Mar. 20, '31. (7.)

By Clara Smith. *Time and Tide*. Sept. 27, '30.  
(11:1208.)

By Humbert Wolfe. *Observer*. Sept. 21, '30. (8.)

By Francis Yeats-Brown. *Spectator*. Oct. 4, '30.  
(461.)

Alvaro, Corrado.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 29,  
'31. (30:68.)

American Short Story.

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London.) Nov. 15,  
'30. (150:636.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Aug. 14,  
'30. (29:655.) Nov. 27, '30. (29:1009.)

- By B. I. E. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 21, '30.  
(5.)  
By V. S. Pritchett. Spectator. Nov. 15, '30. (737.)  
Andersen, Hans Christian.  
By Muriel Kent. London Mercury. Jan., '31.  
(23:265.)  
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Dec.  
28, '30. (5.)  
Austin, F. Britten.  
By Kathleen C. Tomlinson. Nation and Athenæum.  
Dec. 6, '30. (48:334.)

Baker, George.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 12,  
'31. (30:196.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

Bates, H. E.

Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 10, '31.  
(5.)

Beerbohm, Max.

By E. F. Benson. Spectator. Jan. 31, '31. (144.)

Bennett, Arnold.

Anonymous. Obituary notices in all British news-  
papers. Mar. 28, 29, '31.

Anonymous. Everyman. Apr. 2, '31. (5:292.)

Anonymous. John o' London's Weekly. Apr. 18,  
'31. (25:48.) Apr. 25, '31. (25:87, 89.)

Anonymous. New Statesman. Apr. 4, '31. (n. s.  
1:207.)

By 'Atticus.' Sunday Times. Apr. 5, '31. (9.)

By Ivor Brown. Week-end Review. Apr. 4, '31.  
(3:503.)



ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 351

- By St. John Ervine. *Time and Tide*. Apr. 11, '31.  
(12:435.)
- By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Mar. 29, '31. (14.)
- By Richard Jennings. *Spectator*. Apr. 4, '31. (536.)
- By Robert Lynd. *Daily News*. Mar. 28, '31.
- By Desmond MacCarthy. *Sunday Times*. Mar. 29, '31. (19.)
- Week-end Review*. Apr. 4, '31. (3:504.)
- By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*.  
Apr. 2, '31. (5.)
- By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Apr. 4, '31.  
(n. s. 1:217.)
- By Edward Shanks, *John o' London's Weekly*. Apr.  
18, '31. (25:51.)
- By J. C. Squire. *Observer*. Apr. 5, '31. (4.)
- By A. Wyatt Tilby. *Saturday Review* (London).  
Apr. 4, '31. (151:489.)
- Benson, Stella.
- Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Apr. 11, '31. (n. s.  
1:259.)
- Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 2,  
'31. (30:268.)
- By Gerald Bullett. *Week-end Review*. Apr. 4, '31.  
(3:518.)
- By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Apr. 19, '31. (6.)
- Bierce, Ambrose.
- By Vincent O'Sullivan. *Dublin Magazine*. Jul.-  
Sept., '30. (56.)
- Birkett, H. F.
- Anonymous. *Manchester Guardian*. Jan. 2, '31. (3.)
- Blackwood, Algernon.
- By Humbert Wolfe. *Observer*. Sept. 21, '30. (8.)
- Blatchford, Robert.
- Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 2,  
'31. (30:273.)

Blumenfeld, Josephine.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 12, '30. (29:496.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Jun. 8, '30. (5.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Jul. 5, '30. (2:26.)

Boccaccio, Giovanni.

By C. H. Herford. *Manchester Guardian*. Nov. 17, '30. (5.)

Bone, Gertrude.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 22, '31. (30:56.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Dec. 14, '30. (5.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*. Nov. 17, '30. (5.)

Bowen, Marjorie.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 23, '30. (29:868.)

By Hume Gregory. *Observer*. Oct. 5, '30. (8.)

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Feb. 12, '31. (5:72.)

Bradford, Roark.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Aug. 14, '30. (29:652.)

By Clara Smith. *Time and Tide*. Aug. 23, '30. (11:1075.)

By Richard Strachey. *Nation and Athenæum*. Nov. 1, '30. (48:169.)

British Short Story.

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Nov. 15, '30. (150:636.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Nov. 27, '30. (29:1009.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Mar. 15, '31. (5.)

By T. M. *Manchester Guardian*. Nov. 21, '30. (5.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 353

- By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian.  
Mar. 6, '31. (5.)
- By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)
- By 'Stet.' Week-end Review. Mar. 7, '31. (3:359.)
- Brown, Alec.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 29,  
'30. (29:454.)
- By Thomas Moul. Manchester Guardian. Jun. 13,  
'30. (7.)
- By V. S. Pritchett. Spectator. Jun. 14, '30. (985.)
- By Proteus. New Statesman. May 31, '30. (35:247.)
- By Kathleen C. Tomlinson. Nation and Athenæum.  
Jul. 26, '30. (47:540.)
- Browne, Douglas G.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 18,  
'30. (29:1089.)
- By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian.  
Nov. 21, '30. (5.)
- Browne, K. R. G.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 19,  
'31. (30:267.)
- Budgett, H. M.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 11,  
'30. (29:1068.)
- Burke, Thomas.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 12,  
'31. (30:200.)
- By Gerald Gould. Observer. Feb. 22, '31. (6.)
- Byrne, Donn.  
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 2,  
'31. (30:268.)
- By D. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 20, '31. (5.)

Cabell, James Branch.

By H. C. Harwood. *Saturday Review* (London).  
Apr. 11, '31. (151:534.)

By B. S. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 27, '31. (5.)  
'Cailloux, Pousse.'

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 30,  
'30. (29:893.)

By H. B. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 10, '30. (5.)  
Cankar, Ivan.

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Jun. 15, '30. (6.)

Carleton, William.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Nov. 27,  
'30. (29:1003.)

Carol, Richard.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 29,  
'31. (30:80.)

Chesterton, G. K.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Aug.  
21, '30. (29:666.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Aug. 24, '30. (5.)

By P. J. M. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 29, '30. (5.)

By Edward J. Macdonald. *G. K.'s Weekly*. Sept. 6,  
'30. (11:410.)

By Naomi Mitchison. *Time and Tide*. Aug. 30, '30.  
(11:1100.)

Chinese Short Story.

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Jan. 10, '31. (36:416.)

By Hsieh Wen Tung. *London Mercury*. Jan., '31.  
(23:281.)

Colum, Padraic.

Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 23, '31.  
(5.)

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Jan. 17,  
'31. (151:92.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 355

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 19, '31. (30:236.)

Conrad, Joseph.

By Jessie Conrad. London Mercury. Jul., '30. (22:261.)

By C. S. Evans. John o' London's Weekly. Jan. 24, '31. (24:645.)

By G. G. John o' London's Weekly. Jun. 28, '30. (23:435.)

By Edward Garnett. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 22, '30. (5.)

By Otto Lütken. London Mercury. May, '30. (22:40.) Aug., '30. (22:343.)

By Jacques Mouradian. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 30, '30. (29:890.)

Coppard, A. E.

Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 17, '31. (7.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 5, '31. (30:100.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Mar. 15, '31. (iv.)

By Louise Morgan. Everyman. Jan. 22, '31. (4:793.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31. (x.)

Creangă, Ion.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 13, '30. (29:944.)

By G. W. Stonier. Fortnightly Review. Nov., '30. (128:711.)

Cröampton, Richmal.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 19, '31. (30:137.)

Davies, Rhys.

By 'Proteus.' *New Statesman*. Jun. 28, '30.  
(35:369.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

Davis, F. Hadland.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 23,  
'31. (30:329.)

Dawson, Coningsby.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 8,  
'31. (30:30.)

De la Mare, Walter.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Sept. 25,  
'30. (29:753.)

By Osbert Burdett. *Saturday Review* (London).  
Oct. 4, '30. (150:412.)

By Hume Gregory. *Observer*. Oct. 5, '30. (8.)

By Arthur Machen. *New Statesman*. Oct. 11, '30.  
(Suppl., vi.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*.  
Oct. 3, '30. (5.)

By Edith Olivier. *Nation and Athenæum*. Oct. 11,  
'30. (48:54.)

By Clara Smith. *Time and Tide*. Oct. 18, '30.  
(11:1300.)

Defoe, Daniel.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 23,  
'31. (30:313.)

By Sir Charles Firth. *Review of English Studies*.  
Jan., '31. (7:1.)

By Dorothy Gardiner. *Review of English Studies*.  
Apr., '31. (7:188.)

By J. C. Squire. *Observer*. Apr. 26, '31. (4.)

Deledda, Grazia.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 9, '30. (29:806.)

Dostoevsky, Fyodor.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 5, '30. (29:465.) Sept. 11, '30. (29:712). Feb. 5, '31. (30:94.)

By E. H. Carr. *Slavonic Review*. Dec., '30. (9:424.) Mar., '31. (9:753.)

By Anton Florovsky. *Slavonic Review*. Dec., '30. (9:411.)

By Edward Garnett. *Manchester Guardian*. May 15, '30. (9.)

Douglas, Norman.

By H. M. Tomlinson. *Criterion*. Oct., '30. (10:148.)

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan.

By E. C. Bentley. *Week-end Review*. Mar. 14, '31. (3:384.)

By Eileen Hewitt. *Saturday Review* (London). Jul. 19, '30. (150:74.)

By Archie Macdonell. *Everyman*. Jul. 17, '30. (3:771.)

By John Piper. *Nation and Athenæum*. Nov. 8, '30. (48:218.)

By S. K. Ratcliffe. *New Statesman*. Jul. 12, '30. (35:442.)

By Edward Shanks. *John o' London's Weekly*. Jul. 26, '30. (23:564.)

By H. Greenhough Smith. *Strand*. Oct., '30. (80:390.)

By 'Stet.' *Week-end Review*. Jul. 12, '30. (2:54.)

Doyle, Lynn.

Anonymous. *Spectator*. Jul. 5, '30. (24.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 29, '30. (29:460.)

Dreiser, Theodore.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 2, '30. (29:780.)

By Helen Fletcher. Time and Tide. Oct. 4, '30. (11:1236.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Oct. 25, '30. (2:594.)

By Gilbert Thomas. Spectator. Oct. 4, '30. (470.)

Dunsany, Lord.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 23, '31. (30:324.)

By Helen Fletcher. Time and Tide. Apr. 18, '31. (12:474.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Apr. 19, '31. (6.)

Erskine, John.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 15, '31. (30:45.)

By R. B. L. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 24, '31. (5.)

By L. A. G. Strong. Spectator. Jan. 10, '31. (57.)

Fawkes, F. A.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 6, '30. (29:921.)

Fletcher, J. S.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 20, '30. (29:993.)

France, Anatole.

By Janko Larvin. Life and Letters. Nov., '30. (5:341.)

Frankau, Gilbert.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 23, '31. (30:328.)



ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 359

- By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Mar. 29, '31. (6.)  
Froisland, Frois.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Aug. 28,  
'30. (29:685.)
- Gale, Zona.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 15,  
'31. (30:42.)  
By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Jan. 31, '31.  
(3:160.)  
By I. M. Parsons. *Spectator*. Jan. 17, '31. (91.)  
By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)
- Galsworthy, John.  
Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Oct. 11,  
'30. (150:453.)  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 9,  
'30. (29:804.)  
By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Oct. 12, '30. (8.)  
By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Oct. 18, '30.  
(2:537.)  
By Naomi Mitchison. *Time and Tide*. Oct. 18, '30.  
(11:1299.)  
By V. S. Pritchett. *Spectator*. Oct. 18, '30. (553.)  
By 'Proteus.' *New Statesman*. Nov. 22, '30.  
(36:207.)  
By Herbert Thurston. *Studies*. Dec., '30.  
By A. S. W. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 6, '30. (5.)
- Garland, Hamlin.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Mar. 5,  
'31. (30:174.)  
By St. John Ervine. *Observer*. Feb. 8, '31. (4.)  
By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*.  
Jan. 23, '31. (5.)

## Ghost Stories.

Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 6, '30. (150:747.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 25, '30. (29:1100.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 17, '31. (5.)

## Gibbs, Sir Philip.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 28, '30. (29:685.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 3, '30. (5.)

By C. F. K. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 12, '30. (7.)

By Gilbert Thomas. Spectator. Sept. 6, '30. (318.)

By Kathleen C. Tomlinson. Nation and Athenæum. Sept. 13, '30. (47:738.)

## Gide, André.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 8, '30. (29:396.)

## Gissing, George.

By 'Stet.' Week-end Review. Apr. 18, '31. (3:574.)

## Goodchild, George.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jul. 17, '30. (29:594.)

## Gorki, Maxim.

By Maxim Gorki. Everyman. Apr. 30, '31. (5:425.)

By Alexander Kaun. Slavonic Review. Dec., '30. (9:432.)

## Grazzini, A. F.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 7, '30. (29:639.)

## Green, Julian.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 29, '31. (30:76.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Feb. 1, '31. (6.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 361

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Jan. 17, '31.  
(3:90.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian.  
Jan. 16, '31. (5.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Fortnightly Review. Mar., '31.  
(129:426.)

By 'Proteus.' New Statesman. Jan. 17, '31. (36:440.)

By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Jan. 31, '31.  
(12:133.)

Greene, L. Patrick.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 23,  
'31. (30:329.)

Gregor, Josef.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 22,  
'31. (30:58.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Fortnightly Review. Mar. '31.  
(129:426.)

Grimshaw, Beatrice.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb.  
19, '31. (30:137.)

Grinnell-Milne, Duncan.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 8,  
'31. (30:30.)

Hallack, Cecily.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 22,  
'31. (30:62.)

Hanley, James.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 2,  
'31. (30:270.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. Spectator. Mar. 14, '31. (420.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Mar. 15, '31. (iv.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

Hardy, Thomas.

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Jun. 28, '30. (35:380.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 1, '30. (29:367.) May 8, '30. (29:398.)

By Edmund Blunden. *Nation and Athenæum*. May 10, '30. (47:174.)

By Theodora Bosanquet. *Time and Tide*. May 31, '30. (11:700.)

By Osbert Burdett. *Saturday Review* (London). May 3, '30. (149:559.) *London Mercury*. Jul., '30. (22:250.)

By Richard Church. *Spectator*. May 17, '30. (823.)

By Frank A. Clement. *Saturday Review*. (London). Aug. 2, '30. (150:152.)

By Margaret Cole. *Listener*. May 14, '30. (3:863.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*. Jan. 2, '31. (3.)

By H. L. Morrow. *Everyman*. May 8, '30. (3:461.)

By R. A. Scott-James. *New Statesman*. May 3, '30. (35:120.)

By J. C. Squire. *Observer*. May 25, '30. (4.)

By T. Earle Welby. *Week-end Review*. May 3, '30. (1:267.)

By Orlo Williams. *Criterion*. Jan., '31. (10:339.)

By Humbert Wolfe. *John o' London's Weekly*. May 17, '30. (23:189.)

Harris, Frank.

By 'Stet.' *Week-end Review*. Jun. 28, '30. (1:558.)

Hawthorne, Nathaniel.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Mar. 5, '31. (30:173.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. *Sunday Times*. Mar. 1, '31. (6.)

By 'Stet.' *Week-end Review*. Feb. 21, '31. (3:262.)

Hemingway, Ernest.

By Orlo Williams. *Criterion*. Jul., '30. (9:724.)

Hémon, Louis.

By A. Rivoallan. *Dublin Magazine*. Oct.-Dec., '30.  
(27.)

'Henry, O.'

By M. O. Sale. *John o' London's Weekly*. Dec. 6,  
'30. (24:373.)

Hering, Henry A.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 22,  
'31. (30:61.)

Herring, Robert.

By Moray McLaren. *London Mercury*. Jul., '30.  
(22:275.)

Herron, Vennette.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 22,  
'31. (30:61.)

Heward, A. K. L.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 16,  
'30. (29:841.)

Hichens, Robert.

By A. E. Coppard. *Manchester Guardian*. May 30,  
'30. (7.)

Hope, Anthony.

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Jan. 29, '31. (5:9.)

Hoult, Norah.

Anonymous. *Manchester Guardian*. May 16, '30. (7.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 12,  
'30. (29:497.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. May 11, '30. (8.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Jun. 7, '30.  
(1:462.)

By Naomi Mitchison. *Time and Tide*. May 24, '30.  
(11:674.)

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Aug. 28, '30.  
(4:133.)

By William Plomer. *Nation and Athenæum*. Jun.  
21, '30. (47:384.)

By Barbara Euphan Todd. *Spectator*. May 24, '30.  
(873.)

Hudson, Stephen.

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Sept. 27, '30.  
(35:766.)

By B. S. *Manchester Guardian*. Aug. 20, '30. (5.)

By Kathleen C. Tomlinson. *Nation and Athenæum*.  
Sept. 13, '30. (47:738.)

Hughes, Richard.

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Apr. 9, '31. (5:327.)

Hutchinson, A. S. M.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 26,  
'30. (536.)

By A. E. Coppard. *Manchester Guardian*. May 23,  
'30. (9.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. May 11, '30. (8.)

Huxley, Aldous.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 22,  
'30. (29:432.)

By H. I' A. Fausset. *Manchester Guardian*. May 23,  
'30. (9.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. May 18, '30. (6.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. May 24, '30.  
(1:384.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. *Life and Letters*. Sept.,  
'30. (5:198.)

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Sept. 25, '30.  
(4:263.)

By William Plomer. *Nation and Athenæum*. Jan.  
21, '31. (47:383.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 365

By V. S. Pritchett. Fortnightly Review. Jul., '30.  
(128:142.)

By 'Proteus.' New Statesman. May 24, '30. (35:217.)

By V. Sackville-West. Spectator. Jun. 28, '30.  
(1055.)

By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. May 31, '30.  
(11:704.)

By J. W. N. Sullivan. Observer. Feb. 1, '31. (15.)

By Barbara Euphan Todd. Spectator. May 24, '30.  
(873.)

Istrati, Panait.

By G. Malcolm Thompson. John o' London's  
Weekly. Jun. 7, '30. (23:296.)

Italian Short Story.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 6,  
'30. (29:916.)

Jacot, B. L.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jun. 26,  
'30. (29:536.)

James, Henry.

Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 1, '30.  
(48:167.)

Anonymous. New Statesman. Sept. 20, '30.  
(35:740.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept.  
25, '30. (29:749.)

By Osbert Burdett. Saturday Review (London).  
Sept. 12, '30. (150:319.)

By Leon Edel. Times Literary Supplement. Oct.  
2, '30. (29:782.)

By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. Jan. 17,  
'31. (12:69.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. *Life and Letters*. Nov., '30. (5:352.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. *Manchester Guardian*. Sept. 12, '30. (7.)

By H. M. Walbrook. *Fortnightly Review*. May, '30. (127:680.)

By T. Earle Welby. *Week-end Review*. Sept. 13, '30. (2:352.)

James, M. R.

By Peter Fleming. *Spectator*. Apr. 18, '31. (633.)

John, Jasper.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 12, '30. (29:498.)

Keene, Faraday.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 8, '30. (29:396.)

Kiernan, R. H.

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Jun. 21, '30. (1:534.)

Kipling, Rudyard.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 30, '30. (29:886.)

Anonymous. *Week-end Review*. Nov. 22, '30. (2:766.)

By R. H. S. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 28, '30. (7.)

By G. M. Thomson. *John o' London's Weekly*. Nov. 15, '30. (24:250.)

By H. M. Tomlinson. *New Statesman*. Nov. 8, '30. (Suppl., viii.)

By Arthur Waugh. *John o' London's Weekly*. Nov. 8, '30. (24:196.)



Kollontay, Alexandra.

By Alexandra Kollontay. *Time and Tide*. Nov. 22, '30. (11:1459.) Nov. 29, '30. (11:1488.)

Lagerlöf, Selma.

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Jan. 4, '31. (5.)

Lardner, Ring.

By Elizabeth Bibesco. *New Statesman*. Dec. 6, '30. (36:267.)

LAWRENCE, D. H.

*Nine Letters to Katherine Mansfield*. New Adelphi. Jun.-Aug., '30. (3:276.)

Lawrence, D. H.

Anonymous. *Adelphi*. Oct., '30. (n.s. 1:65.)

Anonymous. *Everyman*. Apr. 23, '31. (5:400.)

Anonymous. *Life and Letters*. Nov., '30. (5:377.)

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Aug. 30, '30. (35:650.) Jan. 24, '31. (36:471.)

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Nov. 1, '30. (150:560.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 23, '30. (29:861.) Dec. 18, '30. (29:1083.) Apr. 2, '31. (30:267.) Apr. 16, '31. (30:302.)

By J. E. S. Arrowsmith. *London Mercury*. Dec., '30. (23:187.)

By Gerald Bullett. *Fortnightly Review*. Dec., '30. (129:858.)

By Catherine Carswell. *Time and Tide*. Nov. 8, '30. (11:1400.)

By R. H. S. Crossman. *Farrago*. Feb., '31. (2:67.)

By G. B. Edwards. *New Adelphi*. Jun.-Aug., '30. (3:310.)

By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. *Manchester Guardian*. Oct. 24, '30. (5.) Apr. 16, '31. (5.)

- By E. M. Forster. *Listener*. Apr. 30, '30. (3:753.)  
*Spectator*. Apr. 18, '31. (627.)
- By Waldo Frank. *New Adelphi*. Jun.-Aug., '30.  
 (3:320.)
- By Anne Fremantle. *New Statesman*. Apr. 25, '31.  
 (n. s. 1:328.)
- By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Oct. 26, '30. (8.)  
 Nov. 9, '30. (5.) Apr. 26, '31. (4.)
- By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Dec. 20, '30.  
 (2:934.)
- By Joan Haslip. *London Mercury*. Mar., '31.  
 (23:502.)
- By William Jackson. *Everyman*. Feb. 26, '31.  
 (5:140.)
- By James Laver. *Week-end Review*. Apr. 4, '31.  
 (3:514.)
- By Wyndham Lewis. *Time and Tide*. Apr. 18, '31.  
 (12:470.)
- By P. M. Nation and *Athenæum*. May 3, '30.  
 (47:148.)
- By Desmond MacCarthy. *Life and Letters*. May,  
 '30. (4:384.)
- By Naomi Mitchison. *Time and Tide*. Nov. 1, '30.  
 (11:1375.)
- By John Middleton Murry. *New Adelphi*. Jun.-  
 Aug., '30. (3:264.) *Adelphi*. Oct., '30. (n.s. 1:42.)  
*Criterion*. Oct., '30. (10:183.) *Adelphi*. Nov.,  
 '30. (n.s. 1:142.) Dec., '30. (n.s. 1:195.) Jan.,  
 '31. (n.s. 1:322.) Feb., '31. (n.s. 1:413.) Mar. '31.  
 (n.s. 1:455.)
- By George H. Neville. *London Mercury*. Mar., '31.  
 (23:477.)
- By V. S. Pritchett. *Spectator*. Dec. 20, '30. (990.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 369

By Richard Rees. New Adelphi. Jun.-Aug., '30.  
(3:317.)

By Charles Riddell. Week-end Review. May 3, '30.  
(1:274.)

By V. Sackville-West. Spectator. Jun. 28, '30.  
(1055.)

By George Ryley Scott. New Age. Nov. 27, '30.  
(48:43.)

By Osbert Sitwell. Week-end Review. Feb. 7, '31.  
(3:173.)

By John Heywood Thomas. Criterion. Oct., '30.  
(10:5.)

By Geoffrey West. Saturday Review (London).  
Apr. 25, '31. (151:609.)

By Rebecca West. New Adelphi. Jun.-Aug., '30.  
(3:298.)

Le Fanu, Sheridan.

By E. F. Benson. Spectator. Feb. 21, '31. (263.)

Le Queux, William.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 16,  
'31. (30:309.)

Leskov, Nikolai.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 12,  
'31. (30:105.)

Lecke, William J.

Anonymous. Everyman. May 29, '30. (3:563.)

Loria, Arturo.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 9,  
'30. (29:806.)

Lowndes, Mrs. Belloc.

By Louise Morgan. Everyman. Jan. 1, '31. (4:701.)

Lynd, Sylvia.

By Louise Morgan. Everyman. Dec. 18, '30.  
(4:653.)

Maartens, Maarten.

By T. Earle Welby. Week-end Review. Sept. 6, '30.  
(2:322.)

McCurry, Samuel S.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 16,  
'31. (30:310.)

McFee, William.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 11,  
'30. (29:714.)

By Gerard Gould. Observer. Aug. 17, '30. (5.)

By G. I.-C. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 22, '30.  
(7.)

Mackail, Denis.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 14,  
'30. (29:652.)

McKay, Louise.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 16,  
'30. (29:842.)

MacKenzie, Orgill.

By C. P. Manchester Guardian. Jun. 16, '30. (5.)

By Herbert E. Palmer. Adelphi. Nov., '30. (1:171.)

Manhood, H. A.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 2,  
'31. (30:270.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. Spectator. Mar. 14, '31. (420.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Mar. 15, '31. (iv.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

Mann, Thomas.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 28,  
'30. (29:680.)

By A. E. Coppard. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 13,  
'30. (7.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 17, '30. (5.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 371

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Oct. 11, '30.  
(2:300.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Fortnightly Review. Oct., '30.  
(128:572.)

By Richard Strachey. Nation and Athenæum. Nov.  
1, '30. (48:169.)

By Gilbert Thomas. Spectator. Aug. 16, '30. (228.)

MANSFIELD, KATHERINE.

Extracts from a Notebook. Adelphi. Jan., '31. (n. s.  
1:285.)

Mansfield, Katherine.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 6,  
'30. (29:920.)

By T. B. Time and Tide. Oct. 25, '30. (11:1342.)

By Orgill Mackenzie. Adelphi. Oct., '30. (n. s. 1:76.)

Maugham, W. Somerset.

By Barbara Back. Nash's—Pall Mall Magazine. Feb.,  
'31. (52.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. Life and Letters. Feb.,  
'31. (6: 146.)

By Louise Morgan. Everyman. Nov. 6, '30. (4:457.)

Maupassant, Guy de.

By R. E. Sencourt. Criterion. Jul., '30. (9:618.)

Mérimée, Prosper.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 19,  
'31. (30:135.)

Merrick, Leonard.

Anonymous. Spectator. Jul. 5, '30. (24.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jun. 5,  
'30. (29:476.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Jun. 8, '30. (5.)

Metcalfe, John.

By B. I. E. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 17, '31. (5.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Apr. 5, '31. (5.)

- By H. C. Harwood. *Saturday Review* (London).  
Mar. 21, '31. (151:421.)
- By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)
- By L. A. G. Strong. *Spectator*. Apr. 18, '31. (643.)
- Mitchison, Naomi.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Nov. 27,  
'30. (29:1015.)
- By C. H. Time and Tide. Oct. 11, '30. (11:1266.)
- Morley, Christopher.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 1,  
'31. (30:13.)
- Morrough, E. R.  
By 'Proteus.' *New Statesman*. May 10, '30. (35:151.)
- Mottram, R. H.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Nov. 27,  
'30. (29:1010.)
- By Theodora Bosanquet. *Time and Tide*. Dec. 13,  
'30. (11:1577.)
- By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Aug. 7, '30. (4:35.)
- Munro, Neil.  
By St. John Ervine. *Time and Tide*. Jan. 3, '31.  
(12:7.)
- Nesmy, Jean.  
Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 19,  
'30. (29:516.)
- O'Flaherty, Liam.  
By Iris Barry. *Spectator*. Sept. 13, '30. (356.)
- By Shane Leslie. *Saturday Review* (London). Sept.  
13, '30. (150:321.)
- O'Kelly, Seumas.  
By Andrew E. Malone. *Dublin Magazine*. Jul.-Sept.  
'30. (39.)

Pain, Barry.

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Jan. 11, '31. (6.)

Parker, Dorothy.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 23, '30. (29:860.)

By Helen Fletcher. *Time and Tide*. Oct. 11, '30. (11:1267.)

By Hume Gregory. *Observer*. Oct. 5, '30. (8.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Nov. 1, '30. (2:636.)

By G. W. Stonier. *Fortnightly Review*. Nov., '30. (128:711.)

'Philibin, An'.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Dec. 25, '30. (29:1102.)

By L. A. G. Strong. *Spectator*. Jan. 3, '31. (25.)

Phillpotts, Eden.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 23, '30. (29:860.)

Poultney, Clifford B.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 22, '31. (30:61.)

Powys, T. F.

Anonymous. *New Statesman*. Sept. 27, '30. (35:766.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 9, '30. (29:804.)

By John Arrow. *Adelphi*. Jan., '31. (n.s. 1:334.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. *Spectator*. Feb. 21, '31. (280.)

By Hume Gregory. *Observer*. Oct. 5, '30. (8.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Mar. 7, '31. (3:368.)

By M. Everyman. Oct. 23, '30. (4:392.)

By Orgill MacKenzie. *Adelphi*. Dec., '30. (n.s. 1:260.)

By Naomi Mitchison. *Time and Tide*. Oct. 25, '30.  
(11:1340.)

By V. S. Pritchett. *Spectator*. Oct. 11, '30. (503.)

By F. R. Manchester *Guardian*. Oct. 10, '30. (5.)  
Mar. 18, '31. (7.)

By Kathleen C. Tomlinson. *Nation and Athenæum*.  
Oct. 25, '30. (48:140.)

Preedy, George R.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 22,  
'31. (30:58.)

By M. H. Manchester *Guardian*. Nov. 28, '30. (5.)

By G. W. Stonier. *Fortnightly Review*. Nov., '30.  
(128:711.)

Pritchett, V. S.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Oct. 23,  
'30. (29:867.)

By Gerald Bullett. *Fortnightly Review*. Sept., '30.  
(128:426.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Aug. 3, '30. (5.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Aug. 9, '30.  
(2:202.)

By M. A. L. Manchester *Guardian*. Aug. 15, '30.  
(7.)

By 'Proteus.' *New Statesman*. Sept. 6, '30. (35:680.)

Prus, Boleslav.

By Julian Krzyzanowski. *Slavonic Review*. Mar., '31.  
(9:695.)

Pye, Virginia.

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Nov. 30, '30. (6.)

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur.

By Robert Lynd. *John o' London's Weekly*. May 3,  
'30. (23:116.)

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Mar. 5, '31. (5:167.)



ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 375

Read, Herbert.

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Aug. 9, '30.  
(2:202.)

Reynolds, Mrs. Baillie.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb.  
19, '31. (30:137.)

Romanov, Panteleimon.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jul. 3,  
'30. (29:556.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Jun. 22, '30. (6.)

By William Plomer. Nation and Athenæum. Jun.  
21, '30. (47:383.)

By 'Proteus.' New Statesman. Jun. 28, '30. (35:369.)

By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Jul. 19, '30.  
(11:934.)

Rossmann, Hermann.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 15,  
'30. (29:416.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. May 3, '30.  
(1:278.)

By Mark Segal. Nation and Athenæum. May 17,  
'30. (47:226.)

Ruck, Berta.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept.  
11, '30. (29:718.)

Russell, John.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 23,  
'30. (29:868.)

Sabatini, Rafael.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr.  
2, '31. (30:273.)

By H. C. Harwood. Saturday Review (London).  
Apr. 11, '31. (151:534.)

## 'Saki.'

Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Nov. 15, '30. (150:636.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Nov. 22, '30. (2:768.)

By Naomi Mitchison. Time and Tide. Nov. 15, '30. (11:1439.)

## 'Sapper.'

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jun. 5, '30. (29:481.)

## 'Seamark.'

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 23, '31. (30:329.)

## Shaw, Frank H.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 9, '30. (29:812.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 19, '30. (7.)

## Sheppard, Alfred Tressider.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jul. 31, '30. (29:626.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 17, '30. (5.)

## Short Story.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 4, '30. (29:1038.)

## Siamese Short Story.

Anonymous. New Statesman. Jan. 10, '31. (36:416.)

## Sinclair, May.

Anonymous. New Statesman. Jun. 7, '30. (35:284.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 18, '30. (29:412.)

By Helen Gosse. Fortnightly Review. Jun., '30. (127:872.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. May 11, '30. (8.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 377

By O. M. Manchester Guardian. Jun. 20, '30. (7.)

By Naomi Mitchison. Time and Tide. May 24, '30.

(11:674.)

By Gilbert Thomas. Spectator. May 17, '30. (837.)

Sitwell, Osbert.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 16,

'30. (29:832.)

By Mary Crosbie. John o' London's Weekly. Nov.

8, '30. (24:204.)

By B. I. E. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 19, '30. (5.)

By Helen Fletcher. Time and Tide. Nov. 1, '30.

(11:1377.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Oct. 19, '30. (8.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Nov. 8, '30.

(2:676.)

By Sylva Norman. Nation and Athenæum. Dec.

13, '30. (48:380.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Spectator. Nov. 1, '30. (643.)

By 'Proteus.' New Statesman, Nov. 22, '30. (36:207.)

Stacpoole, H. de Vere.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 27,

'30. (29:1017.)

Stevenson. Robert Louis.

By Ernest A. Baker. Modern Language Review.

Oct., '30. (25:491.)

By W. G. Lockett. Times Literary Supplement.

Jul. 31, '30. (29:628.)

By Herbert G. Wright. Times Literary Supplement.

Aug. 21, '30. (29:668.)

Strange, Nora K.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 6,

'30. (29:921.)

Strindberg, August.

Anonymous. New Statesman. Jan. 17, '31. (36:443.)

By St. John Ervine. *Observer*. Feb. 22, '31. (15.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. *Sunday Times*. Jan. 11, '31. (6.)

By William Plomer. *Nation and Athenæum*. Jun. 21, '30. (47:384.)

By Kenneth B. Schofield. *Observer*. Mar. 1, '31. (8.)

Strong, L. A. G.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 2, '31. (30:270.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. *Spectator*. Mar. 14, '31. (420.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Mar. 15, '31. (iv.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31. (x.)

Sutro, Alfred.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 16, '31. (30:309.)

By H. C. Harwood. *Saturday Review* (London). Apr. 11, '31. (151:534.)

Svevo, Italo.

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Nov. 15, '30. (150:636.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jan. 8, '31. (30:26.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Dec. 14, '30. (5.)

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. Nov. 29, '30. (2:804.)

By V. S. Pritchett. *Spectator*. Nov. 22, '30. (802.)

Thompson, Edward.

By L. P. Hartley. *Week-end Review*. May 31, '30. (1:420.)

By Barbara Euphan Todd. *Spectator*. May 24, '30. (873.)

Tinker, Frances and Edward Larocque.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 9, '31. (30:285.)

Tolstoy, Count Lyof N.

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Feb. 7, '31. (151:197.)

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 29, '30. (29:453.) Oct. 30, '30. (29:885.)

By E. H. Carr. *Spectator*. Nov. 15, '30. (734.)

By Edward Garnett. *Manchester Guardian*. Dec. 18, '30. (5.)

By Aylmer Maude. *Times Literary Supplement*. Jun. 5, '30. (29:478.) *Saturday Review* (London). Jan. 17, '31. (151:87.) Jan. 31, '31. (151:160.) Feb. 21, '31. (151:273.)

By A. P. Nicholson. *Saturday Review* (London). Dec. 27, '30. (150:868.) Jan. 24, '31. (151:122.) Feb. 7, '31. (151:197.) Feb. 28, '31. (151:308.)

By Marie C. Stopes. *Saturday Review* (London). Jun. 7, '30. (149:728.)

By Leonard Woolf. *Nation and Athenæum*. May 17, '30. (47:219.)

Tully, Jim.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. May 22, '30. (29:432.)

Von Hutten, Baroness.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 23, '31. (30:328.)

Wakefield, H. R.

By Gerald Bullett. *Week-end Review*. Mar. 28, '31. (3:486.)

By H. C. Harwood. *Saturday Review* (London). Mar. 28, '31. (151:463.)

By L. A. G. Strong. *Spectator*. Apr. 4, '31. (553.)  
 Warner, Sylvia Townsend.

Anonymous. *Times Literary Supplement*. Apr. 2,  
 '31. (30:270.)

By Bonamy Dobrée. *Spectator*. Mar. 14, '31. (420.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Jul. 27, '30. (5.) Mar.  
 15, '31. (iv.)

By Louise Morgan. *Everyman*. Sept. 18, '30.  
 (4:229.)

By V. S. Pritchett. *Spectator*. Jul. 26, '30. (137.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. *New Statesman*. Mar. 28, '31. (x.)

Webb, Mary.

By Grace Chapman. *London Mercury*. Feb., '31.  
 (23:364.)

Wells, H. G.

Anonymous. *Saturday Review* (London). Nov. 8,  
 '30. (150:599.)

By Gerald Bullett. *John o' London's Weekly*. Nov.  
 8, '30. (24:200.)

By Gerald Gould. *Observer*. Nov. 9, '30. (5.)

By Winifred Holtby. *Time and Tide*. Nov. 1, '30.  
 (11:1374.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. *Sunday Times*. Oct. 26,  
 '30. (6.)

By J. Middleton Murry. *Adelphi*. Dec., '30. (xxix.)

By H. W. Nevinson. *Spectator*. Nov. 1, '30. (636.)

By Richard Sunne. *New Statesman*. Nov. 8, '30.  
 (36:147.)

By T. Earle Welby. *Fortnightly Review*. Jan., '31.  
 (129:135.)

By H. G. Wells. *Everyman*. Sept. 25, '30. (4:259.)

By Geoffrey West. *Everyman*. Sept. 25, '30. (4:259.)  
 Oct. 2, '30. (4:323.) Oct. 16, '30. (4:359.) Oct.  
 23, '30. (4:389.)

ARTICLES ON SHORT STORY 381

Wescott, Glenway.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 19,  
'31. (30:137.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Mar. 28, '31.  
(x.)

Wharton, Edith.

Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 6,  
'30. (150:747.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 27,  
'30. (29:1010.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 23, '30. (5.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Dec. 6, '30.  
(2:846.)

By Naomi Mitchison. Time and Tide. Nov. 29,  
'30. (11:1506.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian.  
Dec. 12, '30. (5.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Spectator. Nov. 22, '30. (802.)

Whitaker, Malachi.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 11,  
'30. (29:1062.)

By Helen Fletcher. Time and Tide. Nov. 1, '30.  
(11:1377.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 23, '30. (5.)

By L. P. Hartley. Week-end Review. Jan. 10, '31.  
(3:54.)

By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian.  
Oct. 31, '30. (5.)

By Max Plowman. Adelphi. Dec., '30. (xx.)

By V. S. Pritchett. Spectator. Nov. 15, '30.  
(737.)

Wilde, Oscar.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 8,  
'31. (30:25.)

By A. H. Cooper-Prichard. Cornhill Magazine. Nov., '30. (69:590.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Feb. 8, '31. (8.)

By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Feb. 15, '31. (6.)

By T. Earle Welby. Week-end Review. Feb. 7, '31. (3:184.)

Wilder, Thornton.

By E. G. Twitchett. London Mercury. May, '30. (22:32.)

Williams, Alfred Rowberry.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jun. 26, '30. (537.)

Wilson, Harry Leon.

By Sir Maurice Amos. London Mercury. Mar., '31. (23:467.)

Wilson, Romer.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 29, '30. (29:462.)

Wilson-Fox, Alice.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 23, '31. (30:329.)

Wodehouse, P. G.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jul. 31, '30. (29:626.)

By A. E. Coppard. Manchester Guardian. Jul. 11, '30. (7.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Jul. 27, '30. (5.)

By Gilbert Thomas. Spectator. Sept. 6, '30. (318.)

Young, M. E. M.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 26, '31. (30:254.)



VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES  
PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN AND  
IRELAND

MAY 1, 1930, TO APRIL 30, 1931

NOTE.—*An asterisk before a title indicates distinction.*

I. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

ALDINGTON, RICHARD.

\*At All Costs. Heinemann.

\*Last Straws. Paris: Hours Press.

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BENSON, STELLA.

\*Hope Against Hope. Macmillan.

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VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES 385

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VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES 387

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VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES 389

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VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES 391

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